UNIVERSITY OF LISBON

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Women in the "Land of Do Without"

Ecofeminist Sensitivities in Harriette Arnow's *Hunter's Horn*

Mandala Ananda de la Rivière

Master's Thesis under the guidance of Professor Margarida Vale de Gato and Professor Diana V. Almeida

English and American Studies: With Specialization in North American Studies

2021

Acknowledgements

I want to express deep gratitude to both Professor Diana V. Almeida and Professor Margarida Vale de Gato for the patience, interest, critical insight, and unfaltering support they have shown me throughout this project and my overall academic path.

I further want to thank my partner for the fruitful and constructive discussions, for listening, and, above all, for urging me many times forward.

Deepest thanks also to both my parents who have, from the moments of earliest remembrance, taught me to love my fellow human beings as much as I admired and loved the world of natural wonders around me.

And to my sister, with whom I have discovered that world, and who has, throughout the years, shared my enthusiasm.

Abstract

This thesis offers an ecofeminist reading of Appalachian author Harriette Arnow's novel *Hunter's Horn* (1949). The local multitudes of biological life and an individual rootedness in place, played in concert with a strong patriarchal and fundamentalist religious system have, in Appalachia, forged a deeper awareness of the entangled harms perpetrated against the bodies of women and the earth. This piece aims to illuminate the many ensconced or covert opportunities of liberation that Arnow's female characters create and expressly practice in the rhythm of domestic and agrarian life.

My first chapter explores ecofeminist theory and aims to demonstrate how all manifestations of oppression are potentially interlinked and mutually enforcing. I further elaborate an alternative moral paradigm that will sustain my two analysis chapters. In my second chapter, I set out for a rediscovery of a female frontier's mythology and how its narrative is reflected in the characters' lives and interrelationships with nature. I intend to illustrate the compatibility and similarities between a female frontier mythology of 'place-sharing' and some of the ethical values of an (eco)feminist 'caring-for paradigm'. By investigating an alternative agrarian or 'garden trope', I encounter an unmediated flux between different territorialities and beings, in a cultural setting punctuated by an explicit time-place unity, or where present and past meet in the constant (re)weaving of myth.

In my third and last chapter I examine the two critically distinct, yet interrelated woman-animal connections carved out in the author's work. Shared/intersectional oppressions or, beings whose independence and individuality are thwarted by a mutually oppressive complex, can, through bonds of kinship, achieve liberation and a broader sense of flourishing. Now if Arnow's characters may find transgressive power in their interrelationships with animals, there is no denying that, from a local patriarchal standpoint, the notions of femininity and animality overlap. In fact, from the context of repression and domination, both women and animals' embodiments become an exploited and negotiated 'territory'.

The conclusion I propose is that a space of unalloyed wilderness, a tier of nature that is not inscribed by human laws, remains most congenial to discourses of liberation for any identity that is socially devalued. Arnow is also keen on demonstrating how the quest for individual transgression may further illuminate a way of living ever in between different communities.

Keywords: Harriette Arnow, Appalachian Mountains, *Hunter's Horn*, Ecofeminism, woman-animal connection.

Resumo

Esta tese procura recuperar traços de eco-feminismo no livro *Hunter's Horn* (1949), escrito por Harriette Simpson Arnow, autora nativa da região americana dos Apalaches. O romance relata a vida de uma família precariamente integrada num sistema económico/cultural agrário e autossuficiente nas montanhas de Kentucky, na véspera da segunda guerra mundial. Apesar do termo eco-feminismo com a sua atual carga social e política ter nascido em 1974, a chamada *mountain culture* ou *literature* apresenta, desde o seu auge enquanto expressão literária regional (séc. XIX), sensibilidade e perspicácia perante a interseção de modos de opressão ambientais, políticos e sociais. A própria geografia e abundância ecológica das montanhas, considerada uma das biomassas mais extensas da Terra, assim como a forte ideologia patriarcal e a cultura religiosa fundamentalista, terá certamente ajudado nesta fusão de discursos feministas e ambientais. Por outro lado, o facto de, num contexto Americano mais amplo, esta região e a sua cultura serem fortemente estereotipadas e marginalizadas, e a sua paisagem continuamente explorada pelas indústrias de extração mineira, produz complexos e ambíguos efeitos intraculturais. Se a marginalização cultural da região fomenta, por um lado, uma maior consciência e mesmo estratégias de libertação individual, por outro, solidifica também relações de género fortemente opressivas, especialmente dentro da unidade doméstica ou no círculo familiar. Estamos, assim, perante uma 'estrutura concêntrica' de opressões.

O eco-feminismo é uma filosofia que aborda os vários sistemas de opressão e dominação como interligados e nascentes de um substrato ideológico comum, o sistema patriarcal. De facto, focando-se principalmente na limitação histórica e cultural da mulher, assim como na crescente exploração ecológica no contexto da superestrutura 'androcêntrica' e capitalista, os pensadores eco-feministas criticam os sistemas de emancipação que não incluem outras entidades reprimidas, sejam estas humanas ou não. O primeiro capítulo desta tese debruça-se sobre estes mecanismos de opressão, e recorre a vários dos conceitos utilizados na posterior análise literária. Na primeira parte do capítulo destaco e analiso uma forma de identidade ou 'ser' fortemente segregada e alienada do 'outro' e hierarquicamente dualizada; depois proponho uma alternativa ética e moral que, através do reconhecimento de diferença, pluralidade e individualidade, procura respeitar a intenção ou 'bem último' de cada ser vivo. É de salientar ainda que, ao contrário de outras correntes de pensamento ambiental, o eco-feminismo concentra-se no individuo, e não necessariamente no coletivo, um aspeto sem dúvida herdado da 'ética de solidariedade' feminista.

O segundo capítulo, que funciona como uma introdução à obra da autora, visa demonstrar a incidência ou compatibilidade entre uma re-imaginação feminina do mito da fronteira americana e a ética de solidariedade feminista, a chamada "ética do cuidado*"* (*care ethics*). A 'experiência' da fronteira americana desencadeia duas respostas fundamentalmente diferentes, perante a ocupação do vasto território selvagem, ou *terra nulius,* do continente Americano. Por um lado, surge a idealização masculina da natureza como ser feminino, materno e fortemente erotizado, o que acaba por se traduzir numa ânsia de poder e conquista. Por outro, vemos a preocupação feminina, explorada por exemplo por Annette Kolodny (1984), de transformar o espaço não familiar e por vezes ameaçador num lugar habitado e emocionalmente experienciado, através da criação de um espaço doméstico. Deste modo, a natureza não é conquistada, dizimada ou suplantada pois, através do motivo literário do 'jardim/horta' é estabelecida uma maior harmonia e fluidez entre o indivíduo e a natureza. Esta bifurcação nas visões de género torna-se, pois, evidente nos modos de inter-relação com o meio não humano, e permeia a argumentação crítica desta tese. Se, por um lado, pretendo explorar a necessidade compulsiva da personagem principal masculina em liquidar a vida de um animal selvagem, marca visível de uma ansiedade de purificação do espaço recém-humanizado, por outro, examino também a maneira como o impulso feminino doméstico engendra uma fluidez mais profunda entre as diversas territorialidades e os diferentes seres vivos que habitam estes espaços.

Além disso, o argumento de que as personagens do romance revivem ou reformulam a experiência de um dos mitos fundadores do imaginário americano permite-me explorar a fusão espácio-temporal tão evidente na cultura dos Apalaches, em vez de reforçar os estereótipos de nostalgia sentimental ou deficiência cultural/económica continuamente atribuídos à região. Nesse sentido, a experiência de um tempo ou ritmo cíclico em vez de linear é, para além da memória coletiva ou do *storytelling*, projetada e realçada na própria topografia e abundância da paisagem, distinguindo os dois traços de identidade acima descritos. Enquanto a 'mulher da montanha' demonstra um entusiasmo perante a interseção entre as várias comunidades sociais e naturais, cultivando assim também uma libertação profundamente pessoal, a personagem principal masculina movimenta-se visivelmente numa espacialidade mais 'ameaçadora', isto é, num terreno que precisa de ser dominado. A caça, que dá nome ao romance, e que terá uma decisão tão avassaladora no destino da família retratada, representa narrativamente esta 'ansiedade'.

Assim, apesar de socialmente condicionadas e restringidas ao espaço doméstico (na tentativa constante de encontrar e preservar um lugar de carga pessoal e emocional num ambiente desafiador), as mulheres alcançam um certo grau de subversão dos imperativos socioculturais e dos ditames de género. De facto, a noção de 'domesticidade' e a sua extensão têm de ser reavaliadas segundo o contexto geográfico. Christine Cuomo aponta para este aspeto: as "perspetivas epistemologicamente enriquecidas" ("*epistemically rich perspectives"*) (58), ou os espaços/situações culturalmente e economicamente invisíveis, sustentam não só a sobrevivência da comunidade, como também iluminam um conhecimento mais profundo da bioregião, e uma sensibilidade para com o bem individual de outros seres vivos. Tendo em mente, então, a importância da contextualidade no pensamento feminista, a ética do cuidado traduz-se numa questão de saber ajudar o outro, que pode não partilhar a nossa experiência como ser humano.

O terceiro capítulo explora os dois tipos de conexão mulher-animal criticamente distintos e interligados na obra. Ainda que as personagens femininas, e algumas figuras masculinas, por vezes subvertam o significado cultural da sua inscrição corporal nas inter-relações com o mundo animal, de uma perspetiva patriarcal o conceito de feminilidade é relegado a um domínio de animalidade ou de natureza inferior. De facto, a reprodução feminina e o corpo dos animais são explicitamente abusados e podem mesmo adquirir um valor utilitário e instrumentalista na cultura representada por Arnow. Nesse sentido, os seres humanos e não-humanos, subjugados por uma entidade ou ideologia comum, podem, através de laços de afinidade, de uma prática de compaixão ou, como Jessica Benjamin defende, de uma prática de "intersubjetividade", atingir formas de libertação mútua e garantir um maior 'desabrochar' natural e pessoal. A nível textual, esta 'aliança construtiva' é garantida pelo facto de as personagens não humanas serem, em várias ocasiões, individuadas e incluídas como participantes na narrativa. Assim, a autora consegue criar um diálogo entre humano e não humano com significado ético e ecológico que não parte de uma diferenciação hierárquica ou antropocêntrica, evadindo os dualismos ocidentais de racionalidade/irracionalidade e humano/não-humano. Um dos meus argumentos principais realça como, abrindo possibilidades transgressivas, estes laços de afinidade acabam por ser benéficos e construtivos, não só para os animais ou para os sistemas ecológicos em geral, mas também para as personagens humanas (femininas ou masculinas) oprimidas.

Contudo, afirmar que se pode retirar um valor ecológico das relações partilhadas entre humanos, maioritariamente personagens femininas, e animais, não esclarece os mecanismos

subjacentes a estas tentativas de transgressão/libertação. A segunda parte deste capítulo analisa então a interseção mulher-animal de um ponto de vista patriarcal e repressivo, demonstrando os efeitos prejudiciais que resultam da 'animalização' das mulheres e da 'feminização' da natureza/animais. Esta parte constitui a chave para uma leitura eco-feminista eticamente viável: o contexto de opressão mútua pode substanciar uma postura solidária a que damos ainda pouco valor nos nossos discursos ambientais. Ademais, o cruzamento do conceito de feminilidade com o de animalidade justifica-se na obra por quatro razões: a divisão do trabalho, que 'naturaliza' o confinamento da mulher e do animal num espaço conceptual inferiorizado; a monopolização da racionalidade como característica unicamente masculina; a redução do feminino às suas capacidades biológicas e um fundamentalismo religioso de raízes patriarcais. O sistema religioso, a que dou especial relevância, não só abrange ou sustenta as outras três razões, mas reconhece o homem como protótipo ou exemplar de Deus, concebendo a mulher e os animais como inferiores.

Por fim, esta tese conclui que um espaço selvagem, isto é, um território ou formas de vida não inscritas nos princípios e nas expetativas socioculturais, algo que os protagonistas de Arnow buscam incessantemente, serve os discursos de libertação feminina ou de qualquer outra identidade marginalizada. Na verdade, a autora entretece eficazmente um discurso de pendor feminista com questões de "eco-fobia" (Estok, 75), pois o desfecho do romance realiza uma unidade narrativa entre o corpo feminino e o corpo animal como 'locais' de exploração e de negociação patriarcal.

Palavras Chave: Harriette Arnow, *Hunter's Horn*, Appalaches, Eco-feminismo, Conexão mulher-animal.

Table of Contents

Introduction: Goals and Cultural Context

"The children never said 'tree;' they named the tree: white oak, black oak, post oak, poplar, they knew them all" (Arnow interviewed by Mimi Conway)

During an interview conducted in 1976, Appalachian author Harriette Simpson Arnow (1908-1986) was asked to comment on the fact that numerous readers and critics considered her work a valuable platform for a feminist agenda. The author, visibly discomfited, retorts that she had never envisaged herself or any of her characters as thoroughly feminist. When the question was repeated, her discomfort intensifies: "I'm weary of this talk of women. It's much like the old talk of the proletariat, that woman is woman, and there are no individuals, and all women are alike" ("Interview" 117). We should not take this statement too much to heart, for feminism has come a long way since the 1970s, having shed its deteriorating universalism (Gaard, *Ecofeminism* 295). That woman should be freed from the tether of "biological, conceptual essentialism and universalism" (Warren, *Ecofeminism Philosophy* 53), and recognized as an individual situated in a specific context, is one of the supporting pillars of (eco-) feminist theories today. Indeed, in the words of critic Nina Baym: "a difference more profound for feminism than the male-female difference emerges: the difference between woman and woman" (212). Hence, ironically, while negating crippling forms of essentialism, Arnow seems to stipulate one of the most progressively feminist imperatives, namely that "each [woman] should be permitted to follow her own bent, have control of her body" (Interview 117), a critical vision that is deeply interspersed into her fictional as well as nonfictional work.

My dissertation aims not for an exclusively feminist approach, however. Taking under scrutiny Arnow's second published work of fiction, *Hunter's Horn* (1949), I am interested in enlarging the circle of subordinated 'others' and extending the notions of 'flourishing' and 'liberation' not only to women, but to 'nature-others' as well. To me, it seems sensible that if one dares to idealize the ceasing of unnecessary domination against 'human others', one can only successfully achieve this once other forms of domination and exploitation be actively decimated as well. Moreover, as I argue along my thesis, this task seems of the utmost necessity when one understands, vis-à-vis the bulk of Western culture, how the image of one 'othered entity'—nature for instance—is continuously employed to limit and nullify the agency/subjectivity of the other—woman—and vice-versa. Bestowing particular emphasis on the lives of mountain women, Arnow, among several other woman writers, rebukes "the

misconception that Appalachian authors (and, indeed, Appalachia itself) are simply rural, white and male" (Cory 2). By focusing on a cultural locus that is profoundly rural and particularly infected by a patriarchal ruling ideology, Appalachian female authors are, as Engelhardt (*Roots*) has argued, often able to materialize oppression as an intersectional phenomenon or dynamic in their texts. On another note, while writing this piece (2019-2020), I came across two articles on contemporary politics published in *The Guardian*, acknowledging the interlaced aspect of gender oppression and environmental exploitation, which, in fact, does make itself most felt in poor and so-called 'third world' environments, often a label pinned onto the Appalachian region as well. For instance, Fiona Harvey's illuminating article "Climate breakdown is increasing 'violence against women'" is quite revealing as to how, still today, "gender-based exploitation (…) is hampering our ability to tackle the crises".[1]

In addition, in the field of production/reading of literary texts, I hope to demonstrate not only the ways in which women and the environment remain, to some extent, identically othered, but chiefly how the re-discovery or reassessment of suppressed rural and female discourses raises an assemblage of relational/solidarity values such as sustenance, nurturance, and care which should be better encompassed in our environmental modes of thinking/praxis. Personally, I find that values as simple as those just mentioned are often purposefully overlooked as naïve or childish, lost among the convolutedness of (mostly) male-oriented theory-weaving. Should we want, however, to succeed in dismantling all forms of oppression, or to foster an ethics of care, the distinction of gender marks a quintessential step, ecofeminists agree. After all, and as we will see, place and nature are construed and experienced in highly gendered ways. In that sense, Buell's main directives, that substantiate an 'environmental text', though useful, pay little heed to the hierarchical imbalance that defines the category of 'human', and to the distinct human-non-human forms of interrelationship that spring from such a categorization. I thoroughly agree with Buell in that the nonhuman environment must not merely be considered as a "framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history" (*Environmental* 2). Ecofeminism probes further, however, by calling for 'healthy distinction' within the category of the 'human'. Recognizing that 'human history', or culture, is inextricable from natural history, motivates me, likewise, to look at "the ways that

[1] Harvey, Fiona. "Climate Breakdown 'is increasing violence against women'". *The Guardian*, 29, Jan. 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/29/climate-breakdown-is-increasing-violence-against women. Accessed 12-06-2020.

(…) human relationships shape our relationships to nature—to our own embodiment as nature, or to other humans classified as 'nature'" (Gaard, "Strategies" 47).

What I envision, hence, is an investigation for ecofeminist sensitivities in a work of US literature, Arnow's *Hunter's Horn*, which transports the idea of place and the voices of female characters to its narrative foreground. In truth, tackling the daily lives of 'mountain women' as represented in the narrative will allow me to study how this particular author stages the human social relationships moulding the perceptions of, and interconnections with, the natural world. While attempting to devote balanced attention to exploring relationships or 'intersections' of oppressive mechanisms, and recognizing female strategies of liberation or transgression, I aim to enlighten how both woman and animal remain, culturally—and simply as *woman* and *animal*—oppressed by a pervading and localized patriarchal ideology. While some of *Hunter's Horn*'s female characters indeed present traits of earth-sustainability, and ethically constructive modes of human-nonhuman interconnection, I also want to stress the 'proto-ecofeminist' angle, or what I call along this piece the 'critical vision', of the author herself, who adroitly combines rootedness in place with issues such as female education or overall emancipation and reproductive management. On the other hand, while the title of my dissertation accentuates the aspect of 'doing without', I certainly also celebrate the multifarious ways in which women learned to "make do" (Dykeman, *French* 50). It is in these creatively beautiful ways of 'making do' that I find eco-social value, yet it is also here that the conflict between 'love' for one's locality and a need for personal transgressive experience most acutely emerges from.

This is not to say, however, that I wish to acknowledge Arnow's work purely as ecofeminist, or that it was penned with that specific critical intent—the inception of this theoretical framework would still be some twenty years ahead, anyway. In fact, such a position could, in the words of Greta Gaard and Patrick Murphy, be "arrogant and (…) anachronistic" ("Introduction" 10). Looking for overt forms of ecofeminism in the first half of 20th-century American literature may prove difficult and deceptive on many levels.[2] Engelhardt agrees when she states in her *The Tangled Roots of Feminism, Environmentalism, and Appalachian Literature* that "their [Appalachian proto-ecofeminist writers] tactics were often indirect, surreptitious, and, on many occasions, humorous", yet their intentional purpose and concerns remain visible (12). Indeed, Engelhardt's work of criticism sets out to recover Appalachian

[2] Whereas overt ecofeminist, or even feminist traces may be scarcer to find in literature that predates the 1960's second-wave feminist movement, the critical weight of early works such as Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* may, however, not be underestimated, as it would come to influence much literary production along the twentieth century.

rural women's voices and experiences and examines under what circumstances early environmentalist thinking and feminist sensitivities started to entangle in mountain women's lives/fields of perception. A strong, intimate, physical, and embodied interconnection with the mountains, one which, as we see below, cuts through genealogy and long-running systems of kinship (Wagner; Bell Miles), staunchly counterbalanced by a poignant social system of patriarchal oppression, have led multiple women not only to interlock both causes, but to seek for support and allyship in the domain of the 'othered other'—nature.

Strictly speaking, Arnow is no pioneer in this field—nor is her fiction fleshed out in a conceptual or critical vacuum. Effie Waller Smith (1879-1960) or Emma Bell Miles (1879-1919), whose invaluable cultural observations permeate my work, are some of the Appalachian authors who have, as it were, cleared the pathway, and heralded a more full-fledged ecofeminist vein of criticism that can be found in later twentieth century Appalachian literature. In fact, as Cian has argued, Appalachian literature can be recognized as a 'sub-genre' where "social and environmental issues are effortlessly intertwined" (7). In addition, even though I only grapple with the stereotypical 'construction' of the cultural region below, Arnow's female characters are not crafted from the one-dimensional, unintelligent, boorish, and painstakingly self-abnegating 'female model' usually displayed in local colour writings or travelogues. Works of literature in the likes of *Hunter's Horn* illuminate the ways in which forms of activism, or acerbic thinking, meandered their way, even if obliquely, into rural communities, crystalizing an alternative image of a distinctly 'beautiful Appalachia'. Hence, while Cory envisions "every Appalachian writer [as] an environmentalist" of sorts (1), Engelhardt (*Roots*) proposes that much of the region's female writers, posterior to the local colour movement,[3] do, in some way or another, keep ecofeminist concerns at the heart of their works as well.

What I do consider Arnow an 'Appalachian pioneer' in, however, is her ability of balancing the flair of specific locality—the regional—without rendering it the defining essence of her work. Her fiction speaks to and from a deeper, universal human condition and corresponds to a literary instance of what ecofeminist thinker Karen Warren envisions as "situated universalism" (*Ecofeminism Philosophy* 114). Additionally, from an environmental perspective, Thompson writes in his *Sacred Mountains* that "to consider place is to consider the particular" (ix), while ecofeminists underline all knowledge or experience to emanate from

[3] The American local colour movement, that achieved its apogee in the post-Civil war decades (1860-1900), aims, as suggested by its name, to describe the particularities of a specific locale. As we see below, the Appalachian local colour movement is held responsible for much of the cultural and literary stereotypes that still broadly define the region today (Shapiro, "Local Color" 11-12).

a specific locale, what is referred to in this piece as 'contextualized' or 'situated' knowledge. As I will illustrate, certain behavioural patterns, wellsprings of individual desire or angst, while clad in a local garment, embody reflections of what every human being either battles against or strives towards. Arnow's characters, inasmuch as the entirety of her narrative, are, therefore, to use Faulkner's fine expression, erected "on universal bones".[4] In truth, as Engelhardt comments, many native or non-native Appalachian women writers, "while social crusaders, [remained] unable to break out of [their] complicity in status quo structures of power that exploit most Appalachian community members" (*Roots* 32).

Furthermore, even though chapter two opens with a general approach to Arnow's fictional work, I will delineate the main streaks of *Hunter's Horn* here, as a way of better orienting the reader. Arnow's second published work encapsulates an extraordinary exploration of one singular fictional community, Little Smokey Creek, embosomed in the Kentuckian Appalachian Mountains. Hardly ever shifting her narrative *locus*, the author recreates a repository of voices as well as an intricate web of different relationships that tie characters and nature intimately together. The novel accompanies the lives of the Ballew family, struggling to maintain a revered ideal of agrarian self-subsistence, amidst a universalizing cultural cadre that extols the merits of progress, technology, capitalism and cultural assimilationism. However, as the reader is precipitously made aware, disruption materializes from all sides, for Nunn Ballew, the family's patriarch and male protagonist, brings his family close to ruination by obsessively chasing King Devil, known as an elusive, preternatural, and possibly bewitched fox. While the novel illustrates the immobilization and lack of access-way this deleterious form of ecocide takes on his wife—Milly—and their children—Suse, Lee Roy, and Deb—I argue that the narrative extends well beyond a simple 'inventory' of negative and oppressive experiences. In fact, it recreates a particularly female mode of inhabiting the mountainous terrain, of seeking in the mountains the compassion and allegiance necessary for due liberation. As I will shortly explain, my attempt at foregoing this commonplace 'victimization' associated to the region is purposefully reflected in the composition and ordering of my chapters.

In addition, Arnow's novel, while remaining one of her critically best acclaimed works, has, ironically, remained for decades sealed in obscurity. In fact, only recently has it been republished by Michigan State University Press. Some of the editorial history of the novel is,

[4] Faulkner, William. Delivered Address Accepting the Nobel Prize in Literature, December 10, 1950 in Stockholm. https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/williamfaulknernobelprizeaddressoriginal.htm. Accessed 15-05-2020.

when called for, included in chapter two. For the moment, it remains important to stress that on her way to publication Arnow has, both as an Appalachian and female author, encountered many obstacles. She was often impelled, by editors or publishing companies, either to craft stereotypical, one dimensional works of local colour, or, on the other hand, to spawn mellifluous southern pastorals— "resell rural America to Americans" was one of her often-imposed assignment (Satterwhite, 111). The Second World War and its aftermath reinvigorated the concept of rural America as the old Arcadian dream, as Mary McCarthy's *Birds of America* (1971) so brightly illustrates. On the other hand, being a woman artist, Arnow is consecutively mistaken for her own characters, and her narratives for her own life— "they never give me credit for imagination" she complained (Satterwhite 108). Both factors remained, unfortunately, paramount forces obstructing her once soaring career.[5] In addition, critical or academic examination of the author's body of work has, hence, lied dormant until the 1980-1990s, and a full-length biography of the author does not exist to this date. What is more, critical studies other than of *The Dollmaker* (1954), her most renowned work,[6] are even scarcer. Those grappling directly with *Hunter's Horn*, and remaining in my reach, have been an invaluable contribution to my own critical and creative thinking.[7] Eckley's *Harriette Arnow* (1974), Haeja Chung's anthology *Harriette Simpson Arnow: Critical Essays on her Work* (1995), encompassing Appalachian scholars Barbara Baer, Glenda Hobbs, Kathleen Walsh and Sandra Ballard's insightful essays, or yet Janet Holtoman's article "Countering 'What God Thought and the Neighbours Said'" (2015) and April Walter's thesis *Appalachian Animals on our Mind: A Survey of Human-Animal Relationships in Appalachian Literature* (2014) function as main critical sources supporting this piece.

Additionally, regarding overall organization, I divided this thesis in three main chapters. In my first chapter, "Ecofeminism, A Theoretical Exploration", I acquaint the reader with the main lines of ecofeminist theory. I not only introduce concepts that will be directly employed and be of further use when analysing Arnow's work, I forward a brief digression of liberational strategies—what some ecofeminists have envisioned as the awakening of the 'socio-ecological self'. It is indeed one of my purposes to illustrate the ways in which Arnow's rural women's

[5] The publication of *Hunter's Horn*, and roughly a decade later *The Dollmaker* (1954), marked the zenith of the author's career. *The Dollmaker* lost the National Book Award to Faulkner's *Fable* in 1955. No other of her works achieved, ever again, much literary recognition.

[6] *The Dollmaker* (1954) explores how cultural displacement and discrimination take their toll on a 'mountain family' that moves from a self-sufficient and peaceful Kentucky farm to the industrial Detroit.

[7] One of the main obstacles I found, while writing this dissertation, was accessing bibliography. As I am dealing with Appalachian literature, some of the articles or books were hard to be made available to me here in Portugal.

interrelationships with the land are well grounded in the values that comprise an open, reciprocal, and dialoguing self. Chapter two, titled "Women and the Land: An 'Arcadian Ecology'", is the first of my two chapters devoted entirely to Arnow's text. I intentionally start my literary analysis by accentuating the female characters' deep and corporeal yearning for liberation, albeit conveyed in covert ways (Engelhardt, *The Tangled Roots*), a vein that thenceforth permeates the remainder of my work. I made this decision based on two similar theoretical reasons. First, I do not wish to highlight ecofeminism as a defeatist search for oppressive systems. In Cuomo's own words, ecofeminism risks, at times, to be taken for a theory that is overly concerned with "domination and oppression, and therefore its contribution to environmental ethics [becomes] its characterization of 'the problem'", exclusively ("Ecofeminist Philosophy" 5). An over-concentration on the mechanics of oppression can, in truth, mar the path of growing. The second reason is, again, concerned with the cultural framework that I am studying—the Appalachian Mountains. Representing or speaking of Appalachia and its powerlessness may reinforce the bulk of academic study that has tinged the cultural region with stigma, stereotypical images, as well as with the notions of economic/political degradation.

In that sense, chapter two covers the ways in which pioneer women's remembered and celebrated narratives of emplacement, after a mesmerizing introduction to the largely unsettled landscape, still engender the performance of twentieth-century Appalachian women's 'holistic ethics'. These values are 'memorialized' and celebrated mainly in the domestic realm, a place of fluidity that reaches in between different communities. This topic in particular allows me to tackle a spatiality that is so ambiguously present in women's personal histories and lives. The kitchen table, as Harjo and Bird argue in another cultural context, may be fundamentally constrictive, yet one must also pay attention to the creative and expressive profusion that is born there (1). Moreover, this performative/relational position is one which, as I will argue, not only conserves a highly localized and bioregional-inflected knowledge, it also gifts mountain women with a horizon of potential freedom, a possibility towards movement. Nevertheless, in the lines of Engelhardt's observations included above, systems of liberation are never explicit in Appalachian literature; female characters must find extraordinary ways of 'becoming themselves' in spaces that are culturally made invisible and constrictive, rigidly defined by another.

My third chapter, "The Place 'Where the Ground is Uneven'", surveys the novel's intertwined relationships of oppression. Yet more prominently, I pursue the idea of potential liberation, and

illustrate how a culturally 'institutionalized/naturalized' woman-animal dyad, oppressive and belittling to both women and animals in its conception, flourishes into kinship bonds that subvert mutual domination into systems of solidarity. I open the chapter exploring how textual animals are granted a significant narrative role or agency for, at times, they are represented as self-oriented, not merely allegorical or figurative beings. Indeed, in light of a flourishing and non-colonizing woman-animal bond of kinship, animals do, to some degree or other, become co-agents. Writing nature, or ethically assuming the stance of 'vocalizing' nature in our texts, means, in fact, extending both ethical consideration and active agency to natural beings or phenomena. From the standpoint of Appalachian environmentalist writing, Jessica Cory has argued that mere contemplation may dangerously merge with "inward-focused navelgazing" (4) and emphasizes that some texts "put nature itself in the role of the protagonist" or at least in the role of textual character (idem). The land is, hence, *uneven*, as it remains a complex task to encompass and represent such multiplicity of differing, contrasting, and at times seemingly incompatible perspectives, voices and relationships. What is more, as to better situate this plurality and the cultural/geographical context of Arnow's work, I proceed by including a brief description of the challenging cultural meaning Appalachia has entailed from a larger American and mainstream vantage point. It is quintessential to bear in mind that any dynamic of oppression reproduced in the fictional space of community occurs, also, in a stipulated region that is, *a priori*, mostly defined by alienating otherness.

Mapping Appalachia

In her acclaimed study, *The Appalachian Frontier*, Wilma Dunaway writes that "outsiders have had a long-running love affair with Southern Appalachia" (1), a sentiment neither respectful, nor pure, for that matter. Curiously, as Appalachian authority Henry Shapiro remarks, characters of local colour romance stories often betoken the ultimate incompatibility between lovers, that is, between Appalachia and the rest of America ("Local Color" 22). In pinpointing the Appalachian region onto the geographical map of the United States, the reader is met with a multiplicity of varying models. Encompassing a gigantic landmass—the famous Blue Ridge Mountains remaining its single and most outstanding mountain chain (Kephart 26)—challenges indeed description and categorization. In Hanna's words, "the shifting boundaries of Appalachia are themselves representations" since they vary according to context (181).

Furthermore, the Appalachian Regional Commission, erected in 1965 with the purpose of assuaging the local socio-economic and political difficulties, defines the region in the following terms:

> The Appalachian Region includes all of West Virginia and parts of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The Region is home to more than 25 million people and covers 420 counties and almost 205,000 square miles (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2013).

Eastern Kentucky however, the *locus* of most of Arnow's fictional communities, is often considered the region's heartland, should indeed such a notion or locality exist. While the Appalachian terrain encompasses an unfortunately degrading nucleus of biodiversity, the different kinds of soils, waters, and climates have, nevertheless, as Davis writes, shaped the subcultures and peoples that inhabit these mountains (1). Dykeman's work *The French Broad* (1992) is an excellent study on the intersections of place and people: the French Broad, a river that snakes through a stretch of the Appalachian territory, becomes, in as much a symbolic as in a real way, the harbinger of tales, goods, and knowledge.

Yet, to define Appalachia, one must go beyond mere notions of geography. As Jane Haskell Speer contends, the word 'Appalachia' itself is bound to conjure a miscellany of meanings and mental images (20) that have not only become maiming in their stereotypical quality but rendered the Appalachian culture or experience as a monolithic block. While often acknowledged as a "south within the south" (Gantt 202), the region is profoundly heterogeneous in cultural and ethnic expression; so much so that the question whether a specifically local or regional identity/culture can in fact exist has often been raised and discussed (Denham 25). In truth, I believe that the notion of diversity espouses, or is at least indicative of, the plurality of experience and perspective to be found in Appalachian fictional texts. A quick glance at the history of its settlement demonstrates how the region offered an abode primarily to "Scots, Irish, English, and German, [yet] African Americans (…) Italians, Poles, Hungarians, and other ethnic groups also settled in the region" (Denham 3), combining a salad bowl of ethnic and cultural diversity to these days. As Engelhardt remarks, the fact that 'Appalachian' is termed in dictionaries as usually pertaining exclusively to "white residents of the Appalachian Mountains" (*Roots* 13) does certainly not sit well with the African American, Asian American or Hispanic communities to whom the mountains have, also, become a home. On the other hand, as Yarnell or Easterling illustrate, Native American peoples, and more remotely still, Paleo-Indian populations have dwelled in these territories for far longer. While brutally assaulted and nearly exterminated during the American period of frontier settlement, some elements of its equally motley and diverse culture— Cherokee mostly—have, in ways

sometimes minute and imperceptible, fused with other (mainly white) Appalachian cultural systems.[8]

Another way of defining Appalachia is by employing the term "cultural landscape" (Easterling 2). As Mann argues in his introduction to *LGBTQ Fiction and Poetry from Appalachia*, Appalachian othered beings/minorities can glide into more conventional or assimilated forms of identity when demanded. In that way, as Blakeney suggests they are "bicultural" (59). Yet, while this definition may, to some extent, gloss over the ethnical disparity presented above, it nevertheless discloses 'Appalachia' as an ideological construct, substantiated by multiple and malignant stereotypes.[9] While the debate between a 'real' and an imaginary Appalachia persists, it is undeniable, however, that the cultural representation of the region is affected by deeply intertextual means (Hanna 184-185). This is to say that textual recreations of place constantly "reference existing representations as they are reproduced and reinterpreted" (187). In Addition, in the words of Henry Shapiro, the cultural region is often mistaken for a "land where moonshiners and feudists live in log cabins and speak the stately language of Elizabethan England, while their wives spin and weave and sing traditional ballads of kings and queens and ravens sitting on fences" (*Appalachia* 43). In fact, culturally, economically, and politically, Appalachia is still today considered "the other America" (Shapiro, *Appalachia* 45). The wide-spanning notions of degrading poverty and the image of the shoeless, downtrodden or inbred farmer, while having often been explored for the benefit of cultural representation, functioned in profoundly adverse ways against the improvement of Appalachian communities' overall conditions.

In truth, one of the main reasons why Appalachia is so thoroughly 'abjected as other' is that it may, in fact, not align itself easily to the 'American dream' and the much American enterprise of cultural homogenization or assimilation (Thompson 82)—the idealized American melting pot. However, the fact that locally there may be "less money, less opportunity for the accumulation of money, and consequently less of what money can provide" (Shapiro, *Appalachia* 44) does not immediately pertain to any handicap of the region perforce. It illustrates, rather, the ways in which the United States is not a country of free and unbounded opportunity, for ongoing "colonial relationships (…) produces Appalachian poverty" (Hanna 183). Interestingly, as I will demonstrate, this is a mechanism that I found reproduced in the

[8] Marilou Awiakta comes to mind, an author whose work fuses indigenous Cherokee culture with a Scotch-Irish Appalachian heritage.

[9] Writer and historian Allen Batteau, among many others, considers the notion of 'Appalachia' purely as a construct: a "literary and political invention rather than a geographical discovery" (1).

most varied of power/powerlessness dynamics: othered identities are often blamed and belittled for shortcomings or deficiencies which stem from hegemonic or oppressive relationships in the first place.

Moreover, the reasons behind the solidification of these ideological 'markers of otherness' are multifarious and complex; the works of Shapiro, Batteau, or Hanna envision the religious missionary work of protestants, the 'intrusion' of 19th century development agents and industrial corporates and cultural representation (mainly literary), as the three major culprits either behind the region's poverty or the overall employment of poverty as grounds for further national exploitation/oppression. It is often agreed that the local colour movement, with its doom and defeatist images, congenial though it was to women artists, paved the way for these sundry 'interlopers'. Religious missionaries, eager to proselytize the 'sinful and savage ways' of the 'mountaineers', or the industrial capitalists, behind the largest resource extraction complexes in the United States—commonly known in Appalachian literature as the hellish undertaking of 'mountain top removal'—gravitated towards a territoriality where exploitation and self-interest could easily materialize.

Hence, the Appalachian local colour movement not only launched and amplified a gamut of stereotypical tropes—feuds, violence, incest, moonshining, lawlessness, etc.—it persistently revolved around the wistful notion of "old times", fomenting the commonplace idea of the region's high immunity towards any type of progression (Shapiro "Local Color" 15). The forms of cultural mystification, the exotic otherness, attracted unbenign forms of national attention. What follows is a sort of strategically ensconced resource (timber and coal) and labour exploitation that, under the pretext of 'civilizing efforts', proves extremely hard to deracinate (Shapiro, *Appalachia*). On the other hand, while economically paralyzing the local populations, the biologic richness of the Appalachian Mountains fell equally prey to a discourse of capitalism and technocracy. Yarnell elaborates:

> The United States had consolidated its control of the region, leading to the acceleration of settlement and resource use from the ancient centers of human activity in the valleys to all but the most inaccessible mountain slopes. Subsistence agriculture and the free-range livestock industry, prominent during the first half of the century, were in retreat. (20)

Numerous species, some endemic and exclusive to the mountains, have suffered extinction at the hands of industrialism.[10] Indeed that local colour works of literature and mainstream travelogues changed, to some degree, the public opinion of Appalachia becomes clear when we realize that shortly after the revolutionary war, the Appalachian people were hailed as brave, courageous and patriotic people (Campbell 120), laudable features the community has, over the centuries, definitely lost.

Furthermore, the image of economic degradation, wedded to notions of primitivist behaviour/knowledge, or lawlessness, persist in setting the tone for the sporadic representation Appalachia earns in contemporary popular culture. From local colour works of literature, to 20th century Hollywood filmmaking, the representation of Appalachia is founded on a strong undertow of denigrating images. The popular 1965 film *Deliverance* remains one of the most clear and harrowing instances of just that.[11] In truth, the commonplace politics of contemporary Appalachian representation remains markedly dualistic— "while for some mountain people were backwards, unhealthy, unchurched, ignorant, violent (…) a social liability, for others they were the uncorrupted 100 percent Americans, picturesque and photogenic pre-moderns who were a great national treasure" (Whisenant 111). In fact, these opposites are not that distinct at all, since the image of primitive brutes and the paragon of 'noble savage'—an idealized guardian of primordial harmony and order—share an element of hierarchical inferior otherness, perpetually construed against a modern, progressive, capitalist and mainstream cultural paradigm.

On the other hand, it is fundamental to acknowledge that some of these denigrating stereotypes are not necessarily blindly erroneous; there is, after all, always some foundation to stereotypical beliefs. Nonetheless, admitting degrading poverty as one of the most recurrent stereotypes is not arguing that poverty did not, to some measure, mould and complicate the lives of Appalachian communities. It is not my intent, nor is this the place, I believe, to question the veracity of each stereotypical claim. Alan Batteau's arguments are of paramount significance here: it is the ways in which these images or concepts are employed—as to bolster an image of Appalachia 'as other'—that point to the importance of creating and spreading non-essential

[10] John Muir's *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf* includes a description of the richness of the Kentuckian and Virginian mountains' fauna and flora. See specifically chapter 2, pp 9-23.

[11] Both Vance's popular *Hillbilly Elegy* (2016) and its 2020 Netflix film adaptation have been criticized for representing Appalachian culture in stereotypical ways. Indeed alcoholism, substance abuse and violence are counted among the movie's main themes.

and a-stereotypical narratives.[12] In fact, as a way of making visible and celebrating this non-reductionist and extremely rich facet of Appalachian culture, Loyal Jones, Blakenely, or Easterling have all concentrated on the subversion of these caustic and pre-ordained concepts into what they call 'Appalachian values'.

While percolating throughout Appalachian culture, some of these values may likewise not be taken up for main or exclusive criteria/characterization, for they would become as essentialist as some of the stereotypes encompassed above. Additionally, while largely cutting through the cultural plurality of the region, these values should equally not at all be constricted to this region in specific, both Loyal Jones and Easterling caution. Interestingly, Jones' *Appalachian Values* seems to fulfil the purpose of giving "Appalachian children a positive view of their Appalachian culture, because of the negative images that many students hold of themselves and the region" (7). He lists the following as commendable features: independence, self-subsistence, familism, communitarianism, individualism, humility and systems of care, solidarity and kinship, humour and a sense of beauty. My second chapter elaborates on the values of community and systems of solidarity and kinship, as I illustrate the ways in which they prove beneficial not only to an ecofeminist literary approach, but to a specifically American and female-oriented myth of place-making.

Curiously, Easterling considers religiosity one of the crucial local values (6-8). Nevertheless, while it may, in fact, spur communitarian union and support, religious expression largely remains, as I illustrate in my third chapter, one of the major cultural sources of obstruction in women's pursuit of independence and liberation. Strict Calvinist forms of belief and worship coalesce easily in a form of fatalism that encumbers personal as well as collective growth. On the other hand, picking up on the above-mentioned value of self-sufficiency, Dunaway has maintained that the proud individualist, cut-off, and self-sufficient farmer, reaping the 'God-sent harvest', may encapsulate a historic and romanticized relic. Studying the complex economic interrelations of Appalachian farmers, Dunaway has demonstrated how they often "actively [participated] in market exchanges to varied degrees" (7). Families that were largely self-sufficient may nonetheless also have partaken in "market economics" (6) long before the region's industrial revolution/occupation.

Finally, a sense of, and deep respect for place is perhaps one of the most outshining and persistent of local values—an intricate, at times complex, relationship with the mountains

[12] See Batteau's *The Invention of Appalachia* (1990), especially the introduction.

themselves. As I will elucidate in chapter two, the summits and valleys embody not only a physical sense of known reality, but they inspirit a sacred meaning—they fuse a sense of place with the malleability of time. In the words of Wagner, people often move in a "genealogical landscape where the land is a 'historical anchor that reaches several generations into the past'" (123). In that sense, as Engelhardt writes, walking barefoot—the exercise of touching the earth and remembering, while learning the names of plants and animals "connects her [Engelhardt] both to her ancestors and to the mountains" ("Appalachian Women's Studies" 12). It is a kind of learning one's own emplacement, the story of one's nativity, as Gary Snyder would phrase it, simply by the blessing of shared experience between self and earth. Hence, to return to the idea expressed in my epigraph, in actively knowing not trees, but types of oaks, elks or poplars, Arnow's mountain children not only bestow a form of individuality to each nonhuman being—they also learn to engage more closely with those beings who herald a different and past time.

One last note, for the sake of clarity, and to avoid falling in the trap of homogenizing universalism, I want to stress that this piece revolves entirely around the fictitious community brought to life in the novel at hand. Other mountain realities and identities, with varying degrees of similarity, do certainly exist; by no means do I wish to subsume or obfuscate the incredible diversity that the region encompasses. Concomitantly, as way of reinforcing the opening of this introduction, Arnow's female characters are not necessarily a model for all Appalachian women, in or out of literary fiction, and so we must read and celebrate them as situated individuals. I make of Cassie Chamber's eloquent words my own: "there are women's stories here [the Appalachian Mountains], stories of resilience, love, and strength. This community knows them well, but their echo has not reached far enough into the outside world. Instead, these tales have ricocheted within the mountains, growing more faint with time" (10).

Chapter 1: Ecofeminism, A Theoretical Exploration

"Where I live as woman is to men a wilderness. But to me it is home" (Le Guin 46)

"How to get people, who perhaps alone on the planet can be ethical, to care for a world that is our home planet and yet also the home for these other creatures?"

(Rolston 116)

Ecofeminism, also known as ecological feminism, is an interdisciplinary framework that suggests that land misuse or ecological extirpation shares a structural basis with the historic devaluation and exploitation of women, the underprivileged, people of colour, and children. Systematic domination of nature is linked to the oppression of women, as both are considered the inferior "others" in a set of hierarchical dualisms that underpin the hegemonic discourse of patriarchy, and its mechanisms of oppression. Indeed, Greta Gaard suggests that ecofeminism aims for an understanding of all systems of oppression as "mutually reinforcing" (*Queer Ecofeminism* 114). Coined and first developed in 1974 by Françoise d'Eaubonne, despite its centuries-old praxis,[13] ecofeminist theory has branched into many critical ramifications.

Additionally, I want to emphasize that ecofeminism is a self-proclaimed open and flexible terrain, an umbrella term, not at all constricted to one uniform vision. Indeed, generalizing essentialism or universalism is a socio-cultural 'tether' woman and the realm of nature should be liberated from. Stephanie Lahar stresses that while ecofeminism draws from social and ecological frameworks, it should embody "an effort to develop open and evolving, rather than finished explanations" (Lahar, "Roots" 107) that welcome contradictions as a richly germinating ground. That is why perhaps, readers are confronted with a dawning multitude of coexisting "ecofeminisms", some indeed more essentialist than others. Ecofeminism seems to me an indispensable framework in that it towers against a strongly male-oriented green movement, be it literary or not, allowing also women to (re)establish a conversation with the land, one that is not exclusively designed by a masculine outline.[14] I do however not mean for

[13] According to Ruder and Sanniti, "the Chipko movement in India can be traced back 300 years, when communities organized to resist the destruction of nature brought on by British colonialism" (5). See also Shiva (*Staying Alive*).

[14] Some ecofeminists insist this distinction be made, as they do not accept the green movement's common assertions that the ecological setback is rooted in anthropocentrism. As women were often excluded from the cultural, social, political and economic realm, they could not possibly be counted among those responsible for a type of destruction that derives fundamentally from those four pillars. They insist hence that ecological destruction is rooted in an 'androcentric impulse'.

alternative or competing areas of male and female "nature writings" to exist, I simply believe that it is possible to strive for a better coalition of both.

In her informative article "Ecofeminism: An Overview and Discussion of Positions and Arguments", Val Plumwood synthetizes the main ecofeminist theoretical approaches in three distinct veins: i) one that roots women and nature's exploitation in the Western hierarchical split between mind and body; ii) one that situates the pronouncement of such belittlement in the historical period of Enlightenment and mechanization; iii) and a third that calls attention to and means to revaluate the constitutive difference of femininity and manhood. While these first two branches can be categorized as philosophical or constructivist ecofeminism, the latter corresponds to what is often known as spiritual ecofeminism. The first category presented, encompassing authors such as Karen Warren, Christine Cuomo, Carol Adams, Greta Gaard, or Plumwood herself, will aid me most prominently in the ecofeminist reading of Arnow's novel. These authors have contributed to the philosophical aspect of this critical framework: they have located the oppression of human others, and the exploitation of nonhuman others, in a historical and cultural cadre. A second category of ecofeminist thinking that Plumwood distinguishes picks up on the idea of a dualistic world conception/construction, yet places emphasis on the mechanistic worldview as emergent principally from Enlightenment philosophy. Merchant's *The Death of Nature* in particular, has traced capitalist ideology, dualistic thinking, the raise of technology, hyper-rationality, and the corrosive linearity of progress to this period or framework (Enlightenment).[15] Nonetheless, both branches offer non-reductionist or non-essential views regarding woman's interrelationship with nature and are often interwoven.

In addition, Plumwood's third category—spiritual or essentialist ecofeminism—encompasses authors mainly from one of the philosophical system's more premature waves, who envision women as inherently and spiritually closer to the realm of nature. Both bodily functions and elements in the female psyche/conscious (Plumwood, "An Overview" 121) lay, purportedly, at the root of this closer association, reason enough, these authors argue, to relocate women to the frontlines of an environmentally friendly campaign. In her work *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Plumwood has insightfully illustrated the reasons as to why "the feminism of uncritical reversal" (31) would not function; that is, why the (eco)feminist branch that envisions as optimal liberation strategy a mere form of dualistic reversal, would not constitute a desirable

[15] In the American context, Leo Marx (*The Machine*) makes a good case of the ways in which the introduction of the machine in the landscape was believed to "machinize" not only the manufacturer's hands, but soul and mind as well. The complexity of machinery was more and more ingrained in the complexity of social and economic systems. Social inequality and natural exploitation became, thus, direct consequences. See chapter 4, pp. 145-247.

nor ethical path to follow: it circumvents the mechanism by upending its polarity. Additionally, female procreativity is a much-debated point, and proves crucial in furthering the exercise of distinction I am pursuing here. While many authors have come to dismiss this vein of essentialist, often called spiritual ecofeminism, they have nevertheless inherited some of its elements. Authors I refer to along this piece, not necessarily subscribing to ecofeminism—De Beauvoir, Ortner, Adorno and Horkheimer, or Bookchin for instance—have all argued that, at a certain cusp in history, hierarchy inclined less favourably to a female than a male purview, due, most possibly, to woman's biological procreative functions.

Yet, this is not the same as conceding that women have a closer and more harmonious interrelationship with nature because of an inherent biological factor. There is an intermediate step missing here, one that points at the contextual, the historic factors of construal, conceptualization, and institutionalization. A theoretically sounder statement would indeed read that along the formative stages of a patriarchal world narrative, women became conceptualized and institutionalized as closer to nature because of their bodily functions, entailing, as I aim to demonstrate, the delimitation of an entire economic productive system, one that relegates women to interfused spheres of nature and domesticity. As Friedrich Engels contends, the rise of private property and wealth accumulation in an agrarian context substantiated patriarchal power, and under the notions of property and ownership, women would become easily exploited. In addition, the notion of 'patriarchal family' proves devastating for woman especially; it is prone to construe, as we will see in chapter three, woman as a reproductive instrument for the ascertainment of (male) offspring (119), so that the perpetuation of private property is secured by an emerging patriarchal ruling class. In that sense, as Birkeland recalls: "the assertion of 'difference' is based on the historical socialization and oppression of women, not biologism" (22), which does nevertheless not mean that the factor of biology may not play a fundamental role in the historical endeavour of subduing women.

Hence, along the course of my chapters, whenever I accentuate or indeed call for celebration of a typically female-represented dynamic of caring, a tendency to foster community relationships, to pursue interspecies-communication and kinship, or to collect a form of nature/bioregional knowledge, I do not mean to cluster these laudable values as essentially female. They stem, most of the times, from a female need of liberation and self-healing. On the other hand, I must also advert here, from the onset of this study, that any reference to "masculine" and "feminine" must be viewed as metaphorical categories of values, with which,

as Birkland stresses, either sex can and does, in fact, identify (15). A considerably underdeveloped aspect of ecofeminist theory deals also with the 're-naturalization' of masculinities, that is, finding the ways in which men can (re)connect, in a more respectful, sustainable, and relational way with the nonhuman universe. The study of eco-masculinities illuminates the ways in which ecofeminist values are, in fact, not limited to gender categories.[16] Indeed, biologically or psychologically speaking, women do not develop a more thorough sense of care or solidarity towards other humans or 'more than human' beings. It is precisely because of the centuries-long targeted systems of subjugation, a force field which has economically, politically, and culturally immobilized and neatly folded woman in the 'nature category', that a certain synchrony, or a span of relational values, has been created and better practiced. As we will see below, not only did an ecological consciousness possibly start in the home sphere, but it also subversively reuses an ethics that has long been determined as a sort of moral *detritus.*

Furthermore, the three key purposes of ecofeminism, ubiquitous among the extensive literature, are the following: debunking the deeply running systems of interlocked domination, so that the recovery and (re)writing of a woman-nature dialogue can eventuate beyond the hackneyed 'woman-as-nature' conception (Kolodny, *The Land*); retrieving women's muted experience and personal histories, essential for the (re)construction of our ethically relational selves; and, lastly, the extension of ethics, or the enlarging of the borders of those counted as moral objects/participants in a given community, must be effectuated and duly represented in pedagogic/literary terms as well. As I write from a literary, rather than from a philosophical standpoint, a human morally sounder exchange with our enveloping bio-community must materialize into the writing/understanding of texts as well, an issue that is picked up again in my third chapter.[17] Non-dominative or exploitative human-nonhuman interrelationships, inasmuch as the granting of narrative agency to the plethora of normally effaced beings, constitute two of Arnow's liberational strategies that I explore throughout this dissertation. Additionally, as we see in this chapter, ecofeminist philosophy recognizes oppression as an 'intersectional phenomenon'. This means that discrimination substantiates from the

[16] Gaard ("New EcoMasculinities") was one of the precursors of theorizing on eco-masculinities. See pages 225-239 especially.

[17] Writing from an ecocritical perspective, Isabel Alves mentions two key aspects of bringing nature or landscape into our texts. Writing nature discloses "the importance of physical and territorial experience to the human soul" (43, my translation)—to what I would add to different forms of human embodiments as well— and it illuminates the relational aspect of all those living in the biosphere (idem), pointing thus to the essentiality of reciprocity, as well as recognizing individuality in the 'whole'. Both these 'guidelines' have supported my arguments along my dissertation.

interconnection of different causes or conditions (race, gender, sexuality, religion, economic privilege etc.), or it may equally mean that certain oppressive ideologies are directed at different individuals, or beings from different species—human and nonhumans individuals alike.

Hence, in this chapter, I will start by presenting a succinct outline of the philosophy, the conceptual interconnections ecofeminism tackles, and explore how systems/relationships of oppression function. Secondly, I will venture into a short explanation of the culturally furnished 'woman-as-nature' metaphor. In the third and last section of this chapter, I include a model of solutions, both suggestive and corrective, that can awaken the individual, both woman and man, to what I call "the socio-ecological self". I find in Ruether's words an excellent indication of the efforts that must be called upon, should we desire for a thorough disintegration of the power complex that dominates the Anthropocene: "women [and men] must see there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination" (quoted in Mellor 204). Exactly how this form of domination operates, and how it could begin to be successfully averted, is what I expound in the ensuing section.

Patriarchy and the Mechanics of Oppression

Women's subordination and overall relegation to secondary status, which Shery Ortner sees as "one of the true universals, a pan cultural-fact" (67), is related to environmental despoilment in that it stems from the same overarching ideology known in feminist literature as patriarchy. Whereas Gerda Lerner defines patriarchy as "the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general" (239), ecofeminists widen the subjugated terrain to the inclusion of non-human life, as one of the primal yet long overseen victims of aggressive control. Indeed, Snyder locates the germination of mass nonhuman destruction in the historical privatization of land, or the enclosure of the so-called "European commons" (39-40). Whereas communal use of the land appears, historically, more sustainable, for holding the land at the heart of community, privatization becomes intrinsically related to commodity production and wealth accumulation; the "spirit of place" (41) is irreversibly lost to the maiming spirit of progress. The fact that, as Engels insightfully affirms, ownership allowed for unbounded power over the land, encapsulates "also the power to alienate it" (269).

Adrienne Rich equally defines the concept of patriarchy in an ominously and all-transversal manner: "the power of the fathers has been difficult to grasp because it permeates everything. (…) It is diffuse and concrete; symbolic and literal; universal, and expressed with local variations, which obscure its universality" ("The Kingdom" 57-58). Precisely because of their putative lack of rational/cognitive skills, the non-human sphere of nature, inasmuch as women, are recurrently considered as 'other', a term that "highlights the status of those subordinate groups in unjustifiable relationships and systems of domination" (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 1). In truth, De Beauvoir was one of the first feminist thinkers who employed the notion of 'other', in that woman becomes the fundamental other to man, becoming what he is, essentially, not (26). This embodies indeed the most primeval form of dualism recorded, the breach between self and other.[18] In addition, the extraneous and debased 'other' is a concept also at the heart of Kristeva's psychoanalytical formulation on the 'abject' (*The Powers of Horror*). Here, the 'other' is, again, vehemently rejected as to fortify the sense of self. I must stress that it is never the other who completely defines itself, identity becomes a sort of by-product. Interestingly, Warren juxtaposes nature to women, people of colour, or children, as they all integrate a cluster of conceptually diminished others, "nature others and human others" (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 1), which, while thoroughly marginalized, foment the hegemony of their patriarchal oppressors, one of the main paradoxical breaches recorded in oppressive relationships.

Furthermore, this overriding androcentric worldview Adrienne Rich points at, propitiating an overarching network of dominative and exploitative relationships, perniciously undermines the organically harmonious experience of "living with" or "living in relation to" (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 22), so essential to the flourishing of any community. If there is no flux, or no "dance of interaction between the one and an independent other" (Plumwood *Feminism* 57), a heavily lopsided power dynamic is at work, one that ecofeminists unanimously acknowledge as the foundation of the patriarchal edifice: dualistic perception and atomistic separation.[19] An in-depth study of the origins and means of the cultural institutionalization of patriarchy is beyond the scope of this work and would demand an unbounded amount of

[18]According to De Beauvoir, the exercise of 'defining', or knowing, requires the establishment of oppositions. She argues: "no group ever defines itself as One without immediately setting up the Other opposite itself" (26).
[19] Atomistic separation, often engendering hierarchical interrelationships, denies a form of collectivism or holism among human beings, and between humans and nonhumans, that aims for respect, care, and solidarity (Donovan, "Animal Rights" 173). Atomistic separation should not be confounded, as I explore below, with concepts such as diversity, distinction, or autonomy.

energy.[20] However, recognizing its implications and the intricate ways in which it construes or perpetuates a certain model of reality, proves fundamental for the task of rewriting nature and women into history, and granting these 'others' their own acknowledged modes of being, or individuality. In her ambivalent work *The Politics of Reality*, Marilyn Frye provides an interesting semantic construction that calls for the urgency of rethinking reality itself, elucidating how a phallocentric ideology remains intrinsically entangled with the idea of property and possession:

> Reality is that which is.
>
> The English word 'real' stems from a word which meant regal, of or
>
> pertaining to the king.
>
> 'Real' in Spanish means royal.
>
> Real property is that which is proper to the king.
>
> Real estate is the estate of the king.
>
> Reality is that which pertains to the one in power, is that over which he
>
> has power, is his domain, his estate, is proper to him.
>
> The ideal king reigns over everything as far as the eye can see. His eye.
>
> What he cannot see is not royal, not real.
>
> He sees what is proper to him.
>
> To be real is to be visible to the king.
>
> The king is in his counting house. (Frye, 155)

What Frye's semantic construction ingeniously shows is how the experience, and further codification of reality is narrowly perceived and related through a masculine sieve and from a position of power. As I will argue, one of the main reasons pertaining to this is that the epistemological disciplines that form, yet also deconstruct, reality have been accessible mainly to a 'masculine elite' group. This not only means that the perception of reality becomes warped

[20] See Bookchin, especially "The Emergence of Hierarchy", pp 62-89. See also Lerner.

or fragmental, it further also bestows a gendered superiority to the cognitive disciplines/abilities apt for its construal and 'scientific' study.

One such striking example is language itself. As Wittgenstein famously observed, the language we recur to in order to narrate 'our reality' is exponent to how we know and partake of reality itself. On the other hand, quite central to Frye's transcribed construction is the issue of property and ownership. Circling back to Engels here, the ownership of private property and the consolidation of the rigid patriarchal family system is presented, in his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, as one of the fundamental benchmarks of male supremacy: diverse forms of social—and I would argue ecological—suppression and immobilization spring from this crystalizing angst around individual ownership. As Vandana Shiva has elucidated, woman's relationship with the land "was not in terms of ownership" (*Staying Alive* 110). Indeed, at the core of private property and the patriarchal family, key vectors in the historic/economic relations of production, resides the fact that woman remains a "slave" to her husband (Engles 119) and the other to his foreground reality. As we will see in chapter three, property ownership and economic self-sufficiency begin to embody two central aspects of a rural or mountain masculinity.

In fact, ecofeminists firmly believe that the present ecological decline, paired to the lack of social equality, cannot be arrested until the hyper-separated or hyperrational ties to reality be seriously challenged. Val Plumwood is insightful when she affirms that once "the oppressions of gender, race, class and nature—finally come together, the resulting tremors could shake the conceptual structures of oppression to their foundations" (*Feminism* 1), envisioning this 'intersectional nature' of oppressions pointed at above.[21] Indeed, what I hope to illustrate in my third chapter is how intersecting or shared forms of discrimination allow the reader to deconstruct the "characteristics of patriarchy that enforce both sexism and speciesism" (Glasser 5). From this angle, 'ecocide', often resultant from 'speciesist' approaches,[22] constitutes the inevitable reverberation of a historical/cultural behavioural pattern that has been identified with a potentially 'masculinist' discourse of power, domination, exploitation, and a capitalist mode

[21] Intersectionality is a concept that, while spread over a wide area of disciplines and fields of study, was originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, in the context of Critical Race Theory. It is best defined as an analytical tool to explore either how oppression might result from multiple and intersecting factors/forces, or how different identities or indeed different species suffer from a shared oppressive ideology.

[22] 'Speciesism' is a term used in environmental and ecocritical studies, defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as: "discrimination against or exploitation of animal species by human beings, based on an assumption of mankind's superiority" (quoted in Wise 22). Furthermore, as Simon Estok argues, speciesism must be counted among other forms of devaluation or grounds of discrimination, such as misogyny, homophobia, classism, ageism, or ableism, etc. (74).

of production, strongly motivating what I called above the "hyper-separated self", a "self" thoroughly dislodged from its social and ecological community.

However, Riane Eisler envisions the problematic self/reality dynamics as not being directly reflective of masculinity (or femininity) itself, but of a subjacent socio-historical value system, buttressing what feminist studies have identified as the performative aspect of gender.[23] Eisler contends that "for millennia men have fought wars and the Blade has been a male symbol. But this does not mean men are inevitably violent and warlike" ("The Chalice" 18). What is truly at stake then, she contends, is "a social system in which the power of the Blade (the symbol of aggression) is idealized—in which both men and women are taught to equate true masculinity with violence and dominance and to see men who do not conform to this ideal as 'too soft' or 'effeminate'" (idem). Hence, following the strands of her thought, rather than woman itself, it seems that the concept of femininity is harshly severed, in an equation where masculinity must, above all, achieve mastery.[24] In Arnow's mountain novels for instance, patriarchy is represented in a way that also suggests men to be victims of a patriarchal system of oppression, albeit in more oblique ways. In the last chapter of this piece, I explore how Nunn Ballew, the novel's main male character suffers the irretrievable backlash from his compulsive endeavour to conquer a public masculine role.

On the other hand, vis-à-vis the records of history, Ariel Salleh holds that "a parallel in men's thinking between their 'right' to exploit nature, on the one hand, and the use they make of women on the other" (quoted in Birkeland 18) becomes apparent. This statement contains two important observations. First, when Salleh points to the "right to exploit" she means an unjustified form of domination, aggression, or killing. Again, according to context, issues as survival dynamics or choosing the lesser evil enshroud different forms of domination or killing. Killing for food in a small and remote community can be justifiable, in that it does not stem from an individual 'power-over' assertion or purposeful wish to annihilate. Therefore, the "right to exploit nature" is decidedly different from the moderate need to take from nature, provided something be gifted in return. Secondly, Salleh elegantly illustrates a form of

[23] Butler's concept of gender performativity is useful here. Gender performance points at the "imitation of gender" (*Gender Trouble* xxviii), which means that the apparent "naturalness" that comes with a gendered category does only seem natural through its performative act. Indeed, forms of transgression, or discourses of liberation, can subvert certain performative acts, and hence, as I endeavour to show in this piece, subvert the meaning of certain gendered principles or categories themselves.

[24] I am reminded of the female role in Greek tragedies. Women were only given power insofar as to demonstrate why they should, in real life, not be given access to it. Through the public diminishment and derogation of women in performance, Greek men ascertained their continuous power in the polis. See Beard's *Women and Power*.

hierarchical power relationship that is raised upon and that further deepens, the distorted and unbalanced dualistic worldview, which Warren calls "value-hierarchical thinking" (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 46). Man, the statement's subject or focal point, is clearly equated with "the self". Nature and women on the other hand, potentially related in concept, represent "the inferior other", they come second to himself. As Virginia Woolf has famously illustrated, the socially perpetuating "masculine complex" (56) has taught man to negate and exploit, simply as a means of incrementing his own self, in other words, to accomplish hegemony. What follows is an explanation of the workings of hierarchical dualistic thinking, and how these conceptual mechanisms furnish and legitimate the patriarchal performance of oppression.

In her work on the dynamics of domination, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Val Plumwood has identified the hegemonic patriarchal structure as "master model" (23), which, while made up of a predominantly male elite, is often "taken for granted as simply a human model" (idem). Perhaps, the most compulsory reason for dismantling dualistic constructions lies in the fact that, as Lahar contends, "the mutual exclusion that thinking in conceptual dichotomies engenders makes us think that violence against women, militarism, and the destruction of ecosystems are issues that can be analysed separately" ("Roots" 29-30), particularly when systems of oppression remain ensconced behind strongly *naturalized* norms. Truthfully, as Plumwood has cautioned, hierarchical dualistic thinking engenders oppression, in that, historically, the traits that define us as humans remain broadly male-oriented or have been historically associated to what she calls "dominant masculinism" (*Feminism* 25). Rationality, the ability to tame and control, religious transcendence, or forms of creative/artistic expression are areas that have been firmly walled off from women, relegated to the under-category of the passive, the other, the animal, the wild, the not-truly-human.[25] Moreover, Joan Tronto observes that we have broadly "[lived] in a society where man stands for human, and where the norm is equated with the male" ("Beyond gender" 652), so that, as Warren suggests, "anthropocentrism has often taken the form of androcentrism" (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 24). Hence, whereas the significance of being human and being a man meld with traits of patriarchal dominance/privilege, it can further congeal a normative pattern that functions as measuring

[25] Plumwood further argues that "the hierarchy of spirit over body is expressed in the dominion of males over females" ("An Overview" 122). Hyper-rationality, the trait that has, mainly since Enlightenment philosophy, been used to define the apartness or uniqueness of human beings, is associated to masculinity, and has aided in the hyper-devaluation of the female body, or the body in general. The Buddhist-influenced bodymind concept, developed by Garry Snyder, proves successful in circumventing the elevation of one over the other, since the mind and the body, and the body and nature flow more freely into one another.

stick: everything compared or gauged against the norm is considered deviant and somehow inferior.[26]

Furthermore, it is not any form of masculinity that is operating here, but a specifically inherited identity model that exerts, as Linda Vance contends, deteriorating "power-over" (134) relationships.[27] By aligning masculinity to full-fledged humanity and hyper-rationality, both the meaning of being human and attaining full manhood are (re)produced on the inference that women and nature's agency and independence should be nullified. Thus, Birkeland presumes that "masculinity is measured by power as well as distance from the feminine" (25). On the other hand, as Warren insightfully stresses, in the logic of hierarchical dualistic construction, "superiority justifies subordination" (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 47). Therefore, to emphasize one's 'full manhood', indeed one's 'full humanity', requires the thorough devaluation and negation of the feminine and its conceptually associated realms. Difference is strategically manipulated as to favour the ruling class or model (Cuomo, *Ecological Communities* 92). The perception of human character is, hence, an area strongly tampered by gender: "man is what human IS; woman is deviant" (Minnick quoted in Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 52), circling us right back to De Beauvoir's primordial self/other dualism. As we will see, placing women amidst the realm of nature in an essentialist manner not only further warrants subjugation, it embodies the bedrock upon which multiple other and intermeshing hierarchical dualisms rest (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 24), much of which are still detectable in our present language use for instance.[28]

Moreover, ecofeminist thinkers believe that the complex dualistic ontology springs from the fractured way in which we have come to perceive culture as superior to nature, a form of "transcendence, by means of systems of thought and technology, of the natural givens of existence" (Ortner 84). This form of "cultural transcendence" encompasses the repercussion of

[26] Even physically this is visible. Braidotti has called attention to the ways in which the "male, white body *allegedly* constitutes the measure of all things" ("Metamorphoses" 123, my italics). The notion of 'alterity' signifies, hence, "being zoomorphic, disabled, malformed or ill-functioning, [those] pathologized and classified on the other side of normality" (idem).

[27] Warren includes a succinct list of different power relations. In truth, not all power manifestations or relationships are harming, education for instance, should employ certain patterns of (non-diminishing) power. See *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, especially chapter 9, pp 46-47. 'Power-over' dynamics is a concept that has spread across ecofeminist philosophy, so I will use it freely throughout this dissertation.

[28] Warren underlines the derogative women-animal metaphors that are scattered all over the English language, and which are belittling to women. She explicates "animalizing women in a patriarchal culture where animals are seen as inferior to humans thereby reinforces and authorizes women's inferior status" (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 27). On the other hand, while we stress the negative character these language tracts assume for women, it remains equally disparaging to animals. Joan Dunayer observes that whereas "only some nonhuman animal pejoratives denigrate women, all denigrate non-human animals" (16).

a network of multiple other dualisms.[29] As Emel proposes, dualistic constructions permeate all forms of oppression, for identity formation is negotiated through rigid hierarchical standards (708). Plumwood indeed defines dualism as "the construction of a devalued and sharply demarcated sphere of otherness" (*Feminism* 41). Here it is important to stress that dualism should not be confused with dichotomy or simple difference. As I will exemplify below, the recognition and indeed celebration of alterity and plurality invite the construction of an expanded, dialogical, and relational self. Total assimilation or overlapping between self, meaning human, and other others (possibly non-humans), may yield facile oppression all the same.

Instead, dualisms constitute disjunctive pairs that cover a field of discontinuity: they are "exclusive (rather than inclusive) and oppositional (rather than complementary)" (Warren *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 46), as they often function in an "up-down" oriented movement (idem). The reason behind this is simple: as mentioned above, a dualistic chasm is always issued by the ones whose position enables the creation of the chasm in the first place, the ones who remain secured in a domain of privilege. In fact, Lori Gruen eloquently suggests that the dualistic ontology "constructs inferior others and uses the inferiority to justify their oppression" ("On the Oppression" 442). At the same time, as I illustrate in chapter three, a substantial part of oppression requires inculcating the oppressed with a false belief of dependency. This means that the slave's identity for instance is only 'completed' or legitimized through his or her continuous association to the master entity. Countless instances of domestic violence victims' excruciating patience or need to stand by their neglecting or aggressive partners contain a clear representation of just that. On the other hand, nature is often similarly deemed a "non-conscious entity", or a non-feeling "wasteland" (Snyder 11), a vision that sanctions many anthropocentric decisions that do not coincide with nature's own *telos* or best interests. Once this "power complex" becomes institutionalized, stamped upon the collective human psyche, a discourse of aggression, control, and exploitation pervades most of our human actions (Birkeland 14). Awareness or the audacity of thinking differently is less and less vindicated until it becomes virtually impossible to alter the cultural paradigm, the so called 'naturalness' of things. As explored in chapter three, the argument that it is a 'natural given' that women belong to the

[29] Not all authors agree on this stance taken by Ortner. Anthropologist Peggy Sanday offers a solid critique to Ortner's separation, as she draws different conclusions from tribal societies. See Warren's *Ecofeminist Philosophy*, especially pages 51-53. From a Native American standpoint for instance, the concepts of culture and nature often merge.

home sphere, or that natural life silently obeys our will, makes transformation and growth all the more complex.

Hence, once the institutionalization of values is successfully achieved, the ripples of diversity glossed over, the political becomes naturalized (Adams, "Feminist Traffic" 200). This occurs, Adams expounds, when a belief or principle originally issued by a ruling elite is publicly considered as a natural given, a true universal, or form of behaviour that is considered as 'part of our human nature'.[30] Indeed, as we will see in chapter three, the reason why gendered conventions in Appalachia are rigidly stagnant derives mostly from a localized concept of 'sacralised natural order'. A strong and vicious religious or Biblical literalism hardens the cultural hankering towards an initial and mythic rule or law. Here I am recalled of Frye's wonderful allegory of the caged bird. If the caged animal sits too close upon the wires, he cannot envisage his own confinement. It is indeed only through a critically detached and "macroscopic view of the whole cage, that you can see why the bird does not go anywhere" (5). On the other hand, if the bird is led to believe his 'nature' or physiology is only fit to fly within the perimeters of his confinement, his questioning mind will hardly wander outside his confining bars. Therefore, systemic flaws or shortcomings are not easily pinpointed in distorted political structures and, as Heller affirms, are "assumed to be inherent within human nature" (238).[31] This ingrained mode of thinking, I argue, continues to perpetuate the patriarchal subjugation of the land, inasmuch as women and other 'social others'.

The following premises are adapted from Plumwood's research on the logistics of oppression and elucidate how the joint construal of woman and nature contributes to their culturally debased position. The female principle starts by being associated with the sphere of nature, primitivism, animality, corporeality, and fertility. Then, it is assumed that the sphere of nature and woman is significantly inferior in contrast to that of man, culture, and reason, the before mentioned effort of 'cultural transcendence'. Here, we can begin to see how a dualistic nature/culture dyad aligns itself with the female/male pair. As I expound in the ensuing chapter, the harrowing nature/culture tension around the American frontier demonstrates this neatly: a

[30] Adams affirms that, in the context of our present meat consuming culture for instance, many "decisions that are actually political are presented as 'natural' or 'inevitable'" (*The Sexual Politics* 201); it is thus believed that killing and eating animals is inevitably part of our nature, while many studies have shown that it springs entirely from a cultural, social, and economic construct/field of privilege. Gaard employs a very similar argument, illustrating how the "equation of sexuality with procreation has been used to oppress both women and queers" ("Queer Ecofeminism" 6) employing an erroneous idea of 'true nature'.

[31] I am of the opinion that queer ecology can aid ecofeminist theories in dismissing structures or patterns of deemed 'naturalness'— the more we immerse ourselves in nature, the more we discover, ironically, that nothing in nature is, in truth, a 'natural given'.

patriarchal and unbound plight to exploit the passivity and delights of a state of nature deemed female and virginal. What is more, other, and equally malignant, dualisms that emerge from the culture/nature matrix are for instance: mind/body, master/slave, reason/matter, reason/emotion, human/nature, public/private; the list is not exhaustible, and many of these disjunctive pairs perniciously evolve and adapt through history.[32] Indeed, Plumwood, as well as Susan Griffin trace some of these dualisms back to the writings of Plato and Aristotle. However, as Merchant illustrates, many other dualistic notions germinate in the age of hyper-rationality and Enlightenment, where the increasingly mechanistic vision of 'the self' supplants a prior and more organically relational one. In fact, theorizing on the American pastoral framework, Leo Marx has underlined how the introduction of a mechanistic world view in the United States, rather than perfecting the pastoral middle landscape has driven society to the ugly complexities of industrialism.[33]

At this point the reader might ask in exactly what ways can a dualistic approach to life define and enhance one specific form of identity while failing to recognize the other's individual agency. In other words, how can those at the top of a hierarchical chain successfully immobilize the other's nature and identity? Five tools or mechanisms are recurrently highlighted in the feminist and ecofeminist literature: backgrounding, hyper-separation, incorporation, homogenization, and instrumentalization (Plumwood, *Feminism;* Frye) all of which will prove, at some point or other, convenient in the reading of Arnow's text. Indeed, according to Plumwood, backgrounding presupposes the creation of a focal point from which a given group of considered 'others' is excluded, and, akin to instances of societal marginalization, constricted to a peripheral territory. Individuals who remain on the foreground, however, fiercely deny their dependence upon the individuals they force into the background. I should note here that conceptual spaces of foreground and background are respectively attributed to another recurrent dualism: the public/private domain. From that standpoint, Joan Tronto rightfully observes that "what is male is important, broad, and public, what is female is narrow, specific and insignificant" ("Beyond Gender" 654). Indeed, from an ecological perspective,

[32] As Maria Mies argues, dualisms survive the test of time through skilful transformation, so that certain principles and characteristics of patriarchy are pervasive and evolutionary. The hunter, for instance, may very well correspond to a proto-militaristic identity, cut from the exact same ideological essence, one of accumulation of personal merit through the act of killing, or thwarting the individuality of the other (paraphrased in Plumwood, *Feminism* 44).

[33] Mahoney in his "Technology and the Democratic Ideal: The Search for a Middle Landscape" illustrates how the rampant search for technology reaches a point where it no longer goes hand in hand with the idea of "social improvement". Indeed, in the history of the literary pastoral, industrialism has unfalteringly entailed social injustice and inequality. Access here: https://www.princeton.edu/~hos/h398/midland.html.

today, most capitalist corporations and industries consider both primary resources, and human labour as backgrounded and irrelevant to their own instrumental pursuits.

Moreover, Frye stresses that "it is essential to the maintenance of the foreground reality that nothing within it refer in any way to anything in the background, and yet it depends absolutely upon the existence of the background" (167). Plumwood similarly affirms that the "masculine achievement in the public sphere denies but presupposes the backgrounded female support system of the private sphere" (*Feminism* 143), since the domestic unit and its functionality remains, even if not acknowledged as such, deeply essential.[34] In this sense, any identity that defines itself through relationships of oppression/dominance does so "against the inferiorized other", for it is "the slave who makes the master", Plumwood proceeds (*Feminism* 49). I will return to this concept of backgrounding in the following chapters, as Arnow successfully subverts the stereotypical foreground-background dynamics in her domestic oriented narratives.

On the other hand, backgrounding can be regarded as the preliminary stage of what is known as hyper-separation. As man and woman, or humans and nature, are assumed to occupy contrasting positions on the dualistic prism, a healthy sense of continuity between both identities is thwarted. Fluidity is repelled and made utterly undesirable. Luce Irigaray traces this form of separatism to our Western Judaeo-Christian foundation myths, unequivocally founded on principles of hierarchy, seclusion, and separation.[35] To ensure this cleavage however, the master identity endeavours to limit and narrow the margin where both identities might occasionally meet and flourish, for they must become repellent opposites. Plumwood calls this "polarization" (*Feminism* 49), the process of ensuring and stabilizing a given identity through the employment of stark contrast. The sacred/profane dualism for instance, "occurs in the context of a powerful priesthood or religious rule, or uses religious symbolism, to protect the power of one group and intimidate and repress another" (Plumwood, *Feminism* 50),

[34] From a standpoint of relationships of productivity for instance, Ruder and Sanniti have elucidated how reproductive labour is not acknowledged as real labour. As I illustrate in chapter three, reproduction "includes both direct, relational care-giving such as child-rearing, elderly care and the transfer of cultural and technical teachings to community members, as well as indirect care-giving, including household maintenance or food and water collection" (9). This form of work while being thoroughly feminized remains also largely non-remunerated. In chapter three I explore how the concept of reproduction assumes a dual meaning, hinted at here: it pertains to biological procreative functions, while from an economic standpoint, it includes the care-labour that is associated to both precreation and domestic welfare.

[35] Divine creation is, in our Western context, based entirely on meticulous separation, (7) rendering a world where the notion of space is conceptually dissociated from the communities who are to inhabit that space, and indeed where man and woman are not created simultaneously. If God, or the masculine principle, is seen to incarnate time, it comes as no surprise, then, that woman symbolizes space and earth, a strong sense of physicality that becomes, eventually, dismissed by medieval neo-platonic theologians and catholic institutions.

precisely what we find in the religious patriarchalism of Appalachian culture.[36] This begets hierarchy and is subsequently wielded by a ruling class/individual, not only to justify oppression itself, but to continuously mute the subjugated group.

In addition, as patriarchy has ensured a field of privilege belonging exclusively to men, women have become what Beauvoir has called "the other" (13), a being not autonomous in herself, but defined in reference to man. I find it significant that, as a culture or a bioregion, Appalachia has itself also been perceived as an "other", in relation to a more mainstream United States. The region is culturally defined not as what it is, not as embodying say, an epicentre of biological and organic life, but as an amalgam of what it is not, a centre of economic value.[37] Women in Appalachia can, hence, be potentially seen as others within an "othered" geo-cultural territoriality, coming at the bottom of a lengthy chain of oppression(s). This way, 'the other's' identity likens that of a blank slate, an individual or collective with no inherent intentions, needs, or feelings, thoroughly malleable to the will of the master entity. As Irigaray observes, responding to the needs of others, woman is construed as delimitating a space for another (3), and while not enrooted in a space she can claim her own, she remains situated in a highly interstitial position. Similar reasoning can be applied to the underlying human/nature chasm. In another context, Deborah Bird Rose stresses that humans have tended to see nature as unfit and worthless, when bearing no traces of our human presence (Paraphrased in Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 60). Indeed, according to Snyder, stretches of land unfit for agrarian purposes are simply construed as useless (11). Nature is conveyed as a passive and primitive realm of matter silently awaiting the footmark of (human) reason/intention. Envisioning nature not as an end for itself grants a sense of validity to our Western proceeding narrative of destruction and mass extinction. In that sense, just like woman, nature is envisioned as delimitating a space exclusively altered by and made for man.

Furthermore, not being an end in itself means being acknowledged merely as a means towards something else. Instrumentalism of human inasmuch as nonhuman others might hence be a

[36] To ensure identity often entails separation from that which one is not or does not want to become. Plumwood (*Feminism*) reuses a valid example given by Emile Durkheim: in religious environments, the sacred is attained through the vehement denial of the profane (44). Another interesting example that I retrieve from sociolinguistics follows the same pattern: in speech events, certain individual speech patterns might be enhanced for the effect of identity separation, as one speaker, for reasons ranging from economic to educational background, does not want to be confused with speakers of another group. See for instance Giles and Ogay.

[37] Interestingly, the American continent was, for a long time, also defined as what Europe was not. For American settlers however, the definition of America as "other" was generally positive and idealistic. As Michael Mahoney ("Technology") contends, the American territory seemed rife with opportunity to accommodate those escaping from the decadence of European aristocracy.

corollary of all other mechanisms hitherto presented. If woman and nature are backgrounded to a masculinist focal point, further relationships with either women or nature can only be of material interest. Plumwood agrees that those positioned on the inferior and less privileged side of the dualism merely serve "as a means to his [the master's] ends" (*Feminism* 53). This process occurs oftentimes unwittingly. Due to the conception of separated self, the master entity grows ever more alienated from the identity he is avidly parting from. Therefore, the oppressors' centrality to their own needs/wants automatically distances them from those of others; they can hardly attune to what the other necessitates. Concomitantly, as Cuomo stresses, oppressed beings grow ever more incapable of perceiving and stipulating their own needs: "a stunningly pernicious aspect of oppression is how it can effectively create desires in the oppressed that are not in their own interest" (*Ecological Communities* 33), since her or his self-conceptualization has been thoroughly undercut to the advantage of a given ruling superior. In addition, "the canons of virtue for a good wife, a good colonised, or a good worker are written in terms of usefulness to the centre" (Plumwood, *Feminism* 53). Ownership of private land, or the instrumentalism of women or children, as proposed by Engels, eclipses them as individual centres of value.[38] Victories or losses do occur, yet only to the commanding centre, since no emotional ties are shared with the instrumentalised other.[39] In a playful manner, derived largely from Native American lore, Snyder imagines whether other animals do not question our obtuse ways of believing them as mere extensions of our instrumental whims (17).

At last, and for these four mechanisms to function properly, the master model must homogenize and assimilate possible individuality among the oppressed collective. In Frye's own words, "to make [domination] seem natural, it will help if it seems to all concerned that members of the two groups are very different from each other, and this appearance is enhanced if it can be made to appear that within each group, the members are very like one another" (34). In that sense, even when we employ all-englobing mass terms such as 'nature', we potentially assimilate the minutiae of ecological life, or, when we speak of women, we may tend to define woman by gender alone, and hence universalise her. Indeed, essentialism, or envisaging woman

[38] Shiva has also explored this same mechanism from a colonial perspective. Colonialized peoples or cultures become dispossessed, in all senses of the word. Dispossession is the undeniable dualistic opposite of possession, ownership. In addition, the difference that is stressed between colonized and colonizer creates a 'poverty of people and land', resultant from what the activist calls "maldevelopment" (*Staying Alive* 4). I will return to this concept in chapter three.

[39] From personal experience, I remember some of my childhood friends as well as teachers, hurting and killing all sorts of animals because they were believed not to feel any pain, a very Cartesian idea. Furthermore, as Snyder contends, these beliefs also relate to the inculcated idea of human and rational superiority (17). How many times were we not adamantly recalled of belonging to a rational group of animals?

or nature solely in the light of oppression carries another form of oppression altogether.[40] I recall Nina Baym's words quoted in my introduction: seeking for the independence/differences among women is as quintessential as exploring why the differences between man and woman became hierarchically tainted, especially when concentrating on the lives of women of another 'time-place'. As I argue below, to contribute to an ethical dialogue that is collective, plural, and holistic, one must recognize the intrinsic and unique value of each being. Above all, it is paramount to know others as situated in their community and spatiotemporal context. In the subsequent section I briefly devote my attention to the ambiguous woman-nature connection, and how to strive for the eradication of its associated essentialism.

The Woman-Nature Connection

The woman-nature connection is an ambiguously shifting concept in ecofeminist literature. As Warren affirms, there is a loss of consensus over whether "some of [these] connections are potentially liberating, or grounds for reinforcing harmful stereotypes" (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 21). Indeed, inserted in a patriarchal framework, inoffensive expressions that we have all at one point used, 'mother earth' or the continuous 'rape perpetrated against her' for instance, may reify and contribute to the discourse of diminishment and domination. However, it is undeniable that within any community tarnished by gender inequality, both man and woman may develop different bodily relationships or affinities with their natural surroundings. Equably undeniable is, Warren observes, how nature and culture are social or human constructs, and thus optimal for gendered projections (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 58). If we focus on the Appalachian context for instance, "embedded within the literature written by women is this kind of identification of body and mind, nature and spirit" (Ganim 258), a fusing of the cultural disjunctions. Nevertheless, some ecofeminists and non-ecofeminist thinkers alike disagree on the subjacent logic of that connection. Whereas Janet Biehl has argued that ecofeminists have built an entire movement upon the very ontological images they want to deconstruct (4-5), Catherine Roach, however, has maintained that everyone and all "is already and equally 'natural', that is, part of nature" (53), and no one can, thus, be inherently closer to nature than someone else.[41] In truth, asserting that woman is biologically closer to nature raises a number of problems that I will address in this section.

[40] Hence, Cuomo's suggestion of including in ecofeminist theory viable modes of female and 'nature' liberation, lest it becomes "a theory mostly about domination and oppression" ("On Ecofeminist Philosophy" 5), with little constructive or positive alternatives. Indeed, exploring nature and women only in the shadows of their oppression, not only clumps all women or nature together, it rehashes a persistent idea of oppression, in a fatalistic way.
[41] See also Huey-li LI or Biehl for well-founded critiques on the woman-nature connection.

Authors such as Biehl have hence been warily suspicious of ecofeminism, as it may easily portend a disguised form of 'essentialist feminism', a celebration of a possible female and biological proximity to nature, rendered in dualistically superior terms. Indeed the "bodybased" argument does not solely differentiate woman's experience in nature, it appears to elevate it in relation to that of man's (Archambault 19). Hence, in the footsteps of several ecofeminist philosophers (Gaard; Plumwood; Warren; Cuomo), I argue that the woman-nature connection must be thoroughly acknowledged as a social, political and cultural artefact. Furthermore, conceiving of the woman-nature association purely as a historic and patriarchal orchestration may offer new and inspiring ways of (re)articulating reality, the self, the body, and our socio-ecological relationships. As I will expound along my dissertation, women's sundry interactions with nature should be considered in the furthering of our environmental as well as social ethics, for they furnish not only a deep respect towards nature, but also the possibilities of liberating the culturally hampered (female) body. These forms of interchange may yield, I believe, a sustainable, non-dissociative link between *all humans* and nature. Truthfully, Arnow does not employ the 'woman-as-nature' trope for the substantiation of her female characters' bonds with nature. As we see in chapter three, her fictional women experience close kinship with animals, yet it is nascent from a position of mutual recognition, a relationship where both woman and animal remain distinct, individualised. From a critical standpoint however, the author is perspicacious when conveying the notion of femininity (subsumed entirely to corporeality and reproduction) as culturally overlapping with that of nature and animality.

Additionally, as I highlighted in the opening of this chapter, essentialist ecofeminism should be set apart from what Janet Biehl considers "rationalist ecofeminism" (10), a nonreductive strand of theory that is "grounded in the potentiality of human beings to consciously (…) create a free ecological society", regardless, ultimately, of the gender cleavage (Vakoch 5). In this sense, woman's potentially more immediate sensitivity of care/nurturance, or 'closeness' to nature is envisaged also as a social construct, resultant from her historical and conceptual allocation to the sphere of 'nature' or the home. Consequently, many women's awareness of this relegation has led them to create and foster communities based on richer intersubjective fluidity. On the other hand, 'the care praxis' is traditionally linked to femininity, for not only have the 'institutions' of maternity and domesticity been ascribed to women alone, they (women) have equally been excluded from a gamut of social, political or cultural paths

accessible only to a white, masculine, and upper class elite.[42] This means that a socially limited, yet nurturing space has, in the words of Virginia Woolf, become woman's (reduced) yet significant reality (70). Ultimately, this relocation of woman to the conceptual territory of "inferior nature" and her private confinement in the domestic unit has rendered her a symbol of nature itself, the passive object of patriarchal pursuit. As Vandana Shiva has insightfully argued, "mastering her"—nature—rapidly morphed into mastering her— woman (*Staying Alive* 15). Interestingly, "inferior nature" speaks of a sphere of nature that usually entails the concepts of wild, uncontrollable, or bewildering, while domesticity implies the ideas of nature as tame: nature domesticated,[43] two antithetical tropes historically connected to 'the nature' of femininity.

Indeed, historically, while man seems to have bestowed upon himself the exclusive prerogative of rational thought, as the creator and guardian of culture, women have potentially filled in abstract places, or interstices of metaphor. The point at issue here is that while man generates content, women functioned as images representative of something else, often devoid of self-essence or creative power.[44] Philosopher Eva Kittay contends that "women's activities and women's relationships to men persistently are used as metaphors for man's activities and projects" (63). On a similar note, anthropologist Levi-Strauss contends in *The Savage Mind*, that while women may generate and create signs, they occupy most commonly a position of the signs themselves (paraphrased in Ortner, 76). Furthermore, Judith Butler set out to investigate whether gender is constructed and performed through "corporeal acts" ("Performative Acts" 521), for the female body remains, in a way, a historical concept: a "cultural sign" (Butler, "Performative Acts" 522), etched with a text of "penalty, loss, or contempt" (Frye, 3). Of course, in the context of the narrative at hand, (female) bodily experience or embodiment cannot be held exclusively as a "cultural phenomenon" (Donovan "Ecofeminist Literary" 177), but as an undivided embedment "in the physical, natural world"

[42] The care ethics paradigm was first developed by Carol Gilligan, in her much-criticized work *In a Different Voice*. It has since been used by a considerable number of ecofeminist philosophers who have re-theorized the concept in a less or non-essentialist manner.

[43] Wildness can also be associated to masculinity, however. As we see in *Hunter's Horn*, the notion of "wild boys", for instance, (Arnow, *Hunter's* 272) never truly diminishes the characters' status. A 'wild woman' or animal on the other hand, is regarded as sexually inappropriate or mentally debilitated.

[44] Ortner postulates that a patriarchal system may have appeared, in part, as women's procreative functions needed to be complemented, or compensated, by a creative edifice (culture) that would, mainly, pertain to men; hence the patriarchal tendency to exclude women from the "artificial" modes of creation—a potential primordial inferiority complex. On the other hand, women have often been associated to a nature-based form of knowledge, and thinkers such as Donna Warnock or Carolyn Merchant have both argued that the burning of witches embodied a patriarchal way of eradicating female knowledge, opposed to the fundaments of masculinist reason and science. See Merchant's *The Death of Nature,* especially chapter 5: "Nature as Disorder: Women and Witches" (p.127-148).

as well (idem). Many of *Hunter's Horn's* female characters strive towards this form of unmediated and non-hierarchical embodiment as a way of liberating themselves from the pernicious cultural signification that their bodies entail.

Following that line of thought, the masculine exploitation of the female image or metaphor is insightfully expounded in Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land*. In the context of American settlement, Kolodny argues that the ways in which the land was envisioned as a mother or a female (virginal) lover, mitigated the hardships of newly arrived settlers, while it equally propitiated a collective mind-set endorsing the gradual onslaught of the thus esteemed "motherland" (*The Lay* 24). In addition, Kittay argues that the 'woman-as-nature' metaphor is a patriarchal manipulative vehicle that redirects woman to the position of passive object. Virginia Woolf illustrates this point most tellingly, when declaring that women function, historically, as "looking glasses", forfeiting integrity of the self, for the glorification of man (37). Everything man yearns to possess, or has in some way conquered, becomes symbolically equated to the passively female (Kittay 64), a motif which, as I will come to show, does not exceed Arnow's critical vision. Provided action is believed to be firmly modelled after metaphorical ways of perception, via symbolic narratives, the relationship between man and woman thoroughly reflects the relationship man establishes with everything else conceptually deemed female.[45]

Moreover, in an overriding patriarchal context, the woman-nature connection perpetuates, even if obliquely, both the continuous exploitation of nature and immobilization of women. Ecofeminist thinkers envisage this as a patriarchal device that enables further elaboration of the human/nature dualism, as it contains the impetus for a joint, interlinked, and organized form of oppression. Indeed, Karen Warren's aphoristic statement illustrates perfectly how the oppression of women and the gradual overmastering of nature become welded in one single pursuit: "the exploitation of nature and animals is justified by feminizing them; the exploitation of women is justified by naturalizing them" (Warren, "Introduction" 12). Perhaps, this could highlight the reason behind the patriarchal effort of divulging woman as "the protected sex" (Woolf 41). On the one hand woman's acknowledged 'inferiority' becomes institutionalized and erroneously deemed as standard; on the other, overprotection seems to me also a dexterous effort to further paralyze women and keep the pillars of social establishment placidly unchanged. Indeed, just like Frye's caged bird, blinding overprotection retains the exploitation

[45] For more on the relation between the construction/perception of reality and the use of metaphor, see Lakoff and Johnson's keystone work *Metaphors We Live By*, as well as Eva Kittay's article "Women and Moral Theory".

of women perfectly naturalized. From an overarching perspective, however, this forceful relegation of woman to an interstitial place may also encode man's own denial of that position in the larger web of life. US nature writers Rachel Carson (1907-1964), Annie Dillard (1945-), Gary Snyder (1930-), or Barry Lopez (1945-2020), to name a few, elucidate how humanity in general lives on borders, ever in between other complex and independent communities, and how the acceptance of, and interchange with those borders proves especially difficult for individuals who were brought up in the context of atomistic separatism and hegemonic rationalism.

From a historic angle, Merchant has written a compact and resourceful study on the origins and the ecological/cultural impact of the woman-nature association. In her work *The Death of Nature,* the author illustrates how socio-political landscapes often overlap with those of nature. In fact, any human social regulation, measure, law, code, or decision ripples through a complexly interlaced web until it not only modifies nature itself, but, more appallingly, our human perception of it. In fact, Merchant is able to show how the human construal and imagination of the land/wilderness dictated for centuries the manner in which nature was treated, whether preserved or exploited. The cornerstone argument that runs throughout this work is that the human-nature dynamic shifted markedly from one of respect, reciprocal exchange and communion, where nature was envisaged mostly as female, organically sustaining and nurturing, to one of uncooperative and exploitative usurpation of its natural wealth. The author argues that imagining the earth as female manifested a strong ethical constraint, or at least postponed for some centuries the plundering of nature's resources: "one does not readily slay a mother, dig into her entrails for gold, or mutilate her body. As long as the earth was considered to be alive and sensitive, it could be considered a breach of human ethical behaviour to carry out destructive acts against it" (*Death of* 3). Curiously, the alternative ethical paradigm proposed by ecofeminist ethics resonates, in a way, with Merchant's vision of imbuing the earth with a symbolically and non-hierarchical, contextual 'female discourse', as to halt its further debilitation.

Delving into history, Merchant considers the 'nature-as-woman' metaphor twofold. Nature is either construed as a caring and nurturing mother, or as a malevolent and evil-striking entity that should be feared and ultimately vanquished. This bifurcated construal is not that dissimilar, as Ortner observes, from that of 'feminine nature', which "manifests this propensity toward a polarized ambiguity—sometimes utterly exalted, sometimes utterly debased" (86). In addition, the much-ingrained Aristotelian and Platonic proposition that the female essence is inert,

complacent and made up of passive matter crystalizes further into the Enlightenment period and is decisive in the formulation of Cartesian dualisms (Plumwood, *Feminism*; Merchant *Death of*).[46] This binary vision of the sexes, as Merchant observes, engenders different implications in a context where nature is putatively gendered, and deemed passive itself, thoroughly subject to mechanistic "external forces" (*Death of* 20). In that sense, the deterioration of nature seems primarily resultant of changes in the social and psycho-historical landscape (Merchant, *Death of* 2-3). As mentioned before, Kolodny argues similarly: construing American wilderness as female may have dampened its exploitation for some time, but would not, in the end, entirely forestall human assault. In fact, precisely because nature takes up a rich yet meek, female, and all giving appearance, what Merchant envisages as the "female Geocosm" (*Death of* 21), its ultimate plundering becomes all the more tempting and inevitable. Eventually, during the Enlightenment period, with the brandishing of reason, the invention of the machine, and the substantiation of 'Baconian' modern science, nature became thoroughly instrumentalised or, in the words of Haraway, a "resource for appropriation" where the studied object/reality becomes sheer property, free to the manipulation of the 'explorer' ("Situated Knowledges" 592).

Moreover, as Adorno and Horkheimer postulate, a key factor placed at the historic inception of the woman-nature connection is woman's biological procreative functions (248), juxtaposing femininity to physicality or an idea of matter, as well as reductively subsuming female embodiment to the function of reproduction. In addition, as De Beauvoir, Kristeva, or Mary Douglas have repeatedly shown, the cultural rejection of childbearing or female menstrual blood is conceptualized as an impending defilement of the idea of social and civic order, worshipped and esteemed as Godlike. Aspects considered as endangering that sense of order become homologous to nature and are conceptually relegated to the sphere of the chaotic wild and unknown. Kristeva indeed accentuates that in a patriarchal agglomeration, while women are "essential for reproduction, they nevertheless endanger the ideal norms of the agnatic group" (77), or those who vie most zealously for the maintenance of a specific order or boundary complex. As I expound in chapter three, Arnow is keen on disrupting this idea of

[46] Both Plumwood and Griffin point in their works to the historic influence of Western religious systems. In fact, assumptions owed in great part to Christian, and later enlightenment philosophy, have led us to see agency or subjecthood only in a number of beings whom we arrogantly consider sentient, conscious, rational, or garnished with a Christian soul (Plumwood, *Feminism* 107-108). Given the fact that animals were long relegated to a conceptual status of hideous bestiality, betokening an untamed, uncontrolled nature, the violence perpetrated against them was openly advocated and many times celebrated, especially, as we see in chapter three, in the public construction of masculine identities.

'supreme order', as she stages and graphically recreates the suffering of Appalachian women's childbearing scenes.

On another note, the spatiality where most women are confined to, especially during and after childbearing—the domestic unit—is equated with the reductive significance of nature, in that both concepts are strategically employed to preclude female emancipation and her contribution to the public, cultural realm. This issue is eloquently illustrated in Adriene Rich's influential essay "When we Dead Awaken". Rich aims for a strong revision of the institution of motherhood, and calls out for a better division of tasks, archetypically doled out to women alone. This management deficit, still tangible in modern childcare planning, continues to ascribe men alone to the realm of the abstract, for women's freedom remains quelled entirely by "species life" (Ortner 77). In addition, as I illustrate throughout the entirety of my dissertation, the praxis of care and solidarity radiates often from a domestic/maternal sphere or sensitivity. In a patriarchal context, and in light of our modern creed of capitalist accretion, these values are dismissively brushed away, rendered insignificant, while, as Le Guin has bitterly observed in "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction", aggression and destruction continue to be lauded as brave, heroic.

Nevertheless, even though woman may be equated with nature, and largely rejected from the plateau of culture, this chasm is not as rigorously, or reductively drawn as some ecofeminists affirm. Mary Mallow indeed suggests that while man and woman shift between nature and culture, they "do not do so equally" (quoted in Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 26). Additionally, ecofeminism, in its pursuit to dismantle dualistic constructions and dominative relationships, must stress "how humans are both of culture and of nature" inherently (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 157), for as Cuomo or Snyder have made evident, our socio-cultural reality, or our individual embodiments, remain embedded in a vast ecological and organic network. Each individual establishes mediated connections with both conceptual categories. In addition, Ortner concedes that while woman is not thoroughly enmeshed in the realm of culture-making, she nevertheless remains positioned in an interstitial place, fulfilling a mediating link between both planes. Indeed, Reshma Ranjith has argued that "women had an inevitable role in reinforcing the solidarity between family and society" (19), and as I stress in chapter two, between the family and the enveloping nonhuman community as well. As I will expound from an Appalachian viewpoint, women, while vehemently excluded from the production of cultural discourse, are nonetheless textually represented as holding the community morally together. In this sense, women do the silent and undervalued work that

offers continuous vitality to the community, and which is based, as we will see, on a relational, dialogical ethic. Ultimately, Appalachian women envisage their community burgeoning with interknitted social and ecological others, rather than seeing it as an accidental assemblage of cleaved beings.

Women's notable contribution to culture is, nonetheless, done peripherally, and remains often ill-acknowledged. Their deeds are merely preparatory, and do not, in most cases, add to their own emancipation. It is often claimed that women are granted the responsibility for "the conversion of nature into culture" (Ortner 84), a mere extension of child-rearing or care-taking activities. Indeed, those held largely responsible for turning children into socially apt human beings, at least during a stage of infancy, are women. The spotless management of the domestic domain, the clear display and impact of a mother's caretaking values, and the proper regulation and stabilization of family dynamics are put on women's shoulders, almost exclusively.[47] Ortner further suggests that the vicious traditionalism and conservatism enveloping woman's socially narrow options is propelled chiefly by the onus of "producing well-socialized members of the group" (85). Hence, women must, above all, maintain an appearance of utter respectability. In the end, it seems to me that women's contribution to culture reinforces their own (cultural) absence. In *Hunter's Horn*, however, some of these aspects, transposed to a natural/geographical terrain that is all demanding or that easily blots out spatial borders, may convert into a heroic form of domesticity and herald a potentially expanding and unconventional set of experiences.

Indeed, at this point, the reader might ask in which ways woman's experiences of confinement could be fruitfully subverted, or gain constructive significance, in the light of our present-day ecological quest. As I will illustrate, a 'home-based ecology', endorsed mainly by women, challenges, ultimately, the boundaries between an owned swath of land, domestic animals, water systems, and those of our broader enveloping biodiversity and ecological system. In fact, in *Hunter's Horn*, it is Milly, one of the main female characters, who best succeeds in transposing domestic or care-giving values to a larger projected spatiality. Renowned philosopher and ecologist Aldo Leopold expressly believes that a land ethic can only flourish

[47] Apart from biological reproductive abilities, women's connection to nature is further perpetuated through the imposed convention of motherhood, or child-rearing tasks. The closeness to, and interaction with children, in themselves envisioned as wild, untamed, irrational, or uncontrollable, further hardens the woman-nature association. While women manage the intra-familial relations, these remain subsumed under man's broader "inter-familial relations" (Ortner 79). Since cultural reasoning is deeply inscribed by the culture/nature dualism, inter-familial relations enfold a higher form of sociability, whereas the domestic unit falls unfavourably under the category of inferior nature.

if the soil and its ecosystems are understood as related, fluid, and enchained (214). In Arnow's novel, the empathy that is gifted to nonhuman others disseminates mostly from a form of care that is learned and put to practice in the sphere of the home. As I want to elucidate further in this piece, the bond of love and respect Arnow's fictional characters share with the land is not merely a product of manifold rejections, forms of self-abnegation, or constraints. It incarnates a gesture of breaking free where, in the end, harmonious inter-subjectivity becomes liberational to the human oppressed self, as well. As remains to be explored in the following section, such an ethic should be regarded as *preventing,* rather than remedying unbalanced and instrumental self-other relationships.

Towards a Relational "Socio-Ecological" Self and its Textual Representation

How then, should the world be perceived and construed, and how should we righteously define our own identities, while best safeguarding the multitude of others around us? As Snyder would put it, how can we maximize the flourishing of those around us? The theoretical endeavour of revolutionizing, or at least improving, the currently institutionalized value systems marks a significant first step towards the extinction of male gender-biased thinking, and 'power-over' relationships, yet it proves not nearly enough, for practice is fundamental.[48] Thus, the reweaving of a moral system strongly hinged on the performance of communicative care seems vital to me. A revision of our Western ethical systems, determined by the concepts of moral fairness and justice (Gilligan 74), and, accordingly, the (re)calibration of the self, are strongly needed for both the liberation of human "others", and for our enlarged, outspreading moral consideration of nonhuman nature. This way, the feminist ethic, striving primarily towards the eradication of sexual difference (Irigaray 6), should broaden and teach us to live among nature in an equally respectful, relational way. Indeed, as I argued above, human transactions do not occur in vacuity, they are captured and enmeshed in a broader web of life (Cuomo, *Ecological Communities* 43). This last section is concerned with the reassessment of ethics for practical inasmuch as literary purposes. In fact, the proposed paradigm, this re-awakening of our 'socio-ecological selves' can and must be interwoven into our literary production and interpretation as well, for they go hand in hand. The representation and challenge of dualistic and hierarchical worldviews forms the cornerstone of a feminist field of ecocriticism.[49]

[48] I recall the political viewpoint of philosopher Hannah Arendt and her warning that theory itself may become complacent and abstracted from reality if not used and respectively adapted to a situated context/practice (Arendt 3-4).

[49] See Gaard's "New Directions for Ecofeminism: Toward a More Feminist Ecocriticism" or Opperman's "Feminist Ecocriticism: The New Ecofeminist Criticism".

Some authors have proposed an alternative mode of construing the world, one that seeks dialogical, rather than 'power-over' relationships with other forms of life, forwarding a paradigm of knowledge that is thoroughly situated. The (eco)feminist values of care I aim to present here are drawn mostly from feminist ethics and psychology studies and have been developed by authors such as Plumwood, Kheel, Lahar, Warren, Cuomo, among many others. As of recent, this field of ethics has been complementary to the field of environmental mindedness and is hailed as quintessential for the better negotiation of "our personal, social, and institutional relationships" inasmuch as our cultural representations (*Cuomo, Ecological* Communities 2). Indeed, as Lahar argues, a deep moral responsibility lies in concocting a mode of being that is in line with a specific "vernacular (…) and contemporary experience" ("Roots" 111), while equally reflecting our personal options and capabilities. Warren reminds us that personal change can be challenging in an overarching social, political and economic system where the slightest tremor of deviation is gravely penalized or else annihilated. Hence, as we see later, the tragic faith that awaits a younger, critically sharp, yet over-ambitious Suse Ballew in Arnow's novel.

Nevertheless, the first step towards this re-examination or reassessment of self is related to the stipulation of boundaries, what Frye identifies as "knowledge of the boundary of the self" (75). This form of being, carefully bounded off, yet not severed from, must be well situated in its space-time context, as I argue below. Furthermore, it seems undeniable to me that the manner in which we apprehend or treat nature is inextricably wound up around the ways in which we envision and handle our own selves and embodiments. If the self is arrogantly projected onto nature or others, what the critic ingeniously calls the love of the "arrogant eye" (idem), we may ultimately vanquish the other's essence or independence, turning them into the extensions of our own desires. Truthfully "one who sees with a loving eye is separate from the other whom he sees" (idem).[50] Without a healthy and non-hierarchical sense of distinction, conquest, instrumentalism, and ownership become our incontrovertible stains upon any social or natural environment. It is my firm belief that not until we learn to accept human and natural others as individual selves, and not as mere shadows of entities, strategically backgrounded to our own material interests, will nature earn a deeper and more holistic value in our lives, imagination, and certainly in our cultural representations.

[50] The author's use of the term 'separate' may be confusing here. Separatism must, in this context, be read as a healthy form of distinction, and not be confused with the alienating and hierarchical separatism that I have deconstructed so far. Here one's separation or sense of 'distinction from' does not diminish the other—it solely acknowledges difference, not order.

What is more, ecofeminists usually critique the field of Deep Ecology,[51] for the self must be recognized and experienced as distinct from other selves: one must know where one ends for another to begin, so to speak.[52] If individual needs are to be met, it is quintessential, also, for individual entities to be recognized not solely as constituents of a larger holistic puzzle. One of the central faults that ecofeminists find in the fields of ecology, conservationism, or environmental science is that the reverence of the whole may often justify the obfuscation of the particular, the individual.[53] On the other hand, this necessity for boundaries may, at first sight, vaguely recall the forms of hyper-separatism or atomistic individualism I spoke of above. It may even seem to run contrary to the ecofeminist vocabulary of relationality and integration: how can boundaries bring together, the reader may ask. Yet, in the words of María Lugones, "love (and care) reveal plurality" (3). Plurality does not spring from hyper-separation in that it does not presuppose any form of monism. Plurality invites dichotomy, not dualism[54]. In truth, Warren, echoing Lugones's words, observes that a "loving perception presupposes and maintains difference—a distinction between the self and other (…) in such a way that it is an expression about the other who/that is recognized at the outset as independent, dissimilar, different" (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 105). As I will illustrate, an alternative ethical system must be significantly "extensionist"—in practice and literary representation— in that it widens the scope of morally considered beings, without erasing their individual subjectivity.

Additionally, as Lahar posits, it is precisely because of the hierarchically divisive and unbalanced rift between self and nature that humans seem to have lost "both characteristic bioregional contours and sensibility for natural limits" ("Roots" 96). Loving and caring ecologically must embody, and stem from, a gathering awareness of natural boundaries, as much as from a genuine appreciation of diversity.[55] I am reminded of Leopold's path-breaking

[51] Deep Ecology is a branch of environmental thinking that proposes a holistic world view and, akin to ecofeminism, believes in the inherent good of all living beings. However, it presents significant differences mainly on the point of distinction. Contrary to deep ecology, ecofeminism promotes a vision where all participants in each system or network must be regarded as different, and to a certain degree autonomous, independent.

[52] See for instance Kheel's "Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology", or Salleh's "Stirrings of a New renaissance". According to these authors, Deep Ecology does not respect the independence and individuality of the other. If I identify or 'merge' with the other, the inherent needs of the other become invariably 'tainted' by my own. Others can only be themselves provided they be acknowledged as independent from myself.

[53] Contrary to ecofeminists, many conservationists or ecologists endorse the practice of hunting for instance. Callicott, in defence of Leopold's "Land Ethic", argues that there is no moral or practical incompatibility between choosing to end the life of an individual being, and believing in the flourishing of an all-encompassing network of life. Ecological studies often incentivize the curbing of animal populations for the 'greater good' or balance of a given bio-community. See also Mallory.

[54] In the previous section I distinguished dualism from dichotomy: dichotomy signifies difference, yet its poles are not ordered in a hierarchical manner. Dualism engenders an 'up-down motion' in that one disjunction remains inevitably superior to, and commanding over, the other.

[55] See also Snyder, especially chapter two "The Place, the Regions, and the Commons", pp. 27-52.

"Land Ethic", where he reflects on the nature of our ancient human-biotic relationships: "the boundaries of the community [are] to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land" (204). In that sense, as Judith Plant stresses, a bioregional philosophy shares a common ground with ecofeminist concerns, for both consider a deep knowledge of, or a sense of nativity to place as essential for the respect of the number of boundaries that crisscross the multiplicity of organic life. Consider, for instance, the inspiring words of Kirkpatrick Sale: "but to become dwellers in the land (…) is to understand place, the immediate specific boundaries where we live. The kinds of soils and rocks under our feet; the sources of the water we drink; the meaning of the different kinds of winds; the common insects, birds, mammals" (42). Notice that an ideal of general sustainability, one we can find in the societies of indigenous American peoples for instance, is acquired through the representation or celebration—often by means of oral mythmaking/story-telling—of individual beings and phenomena; one must harmoniously contribute to or *live with,* instead of exhausting the wealth of the bioregion.

Following this line of thought, a comprehension of situational boundaries furnishes a picture of totality, while remaining kaleidoscopic in its plurality. Truthfully, Plumwood envisages that the dissolution of the self/other or human/nature dualisms is only efficiently attainable through "the reconstruction of relationship and identity in terms of a non-hierarchical concept of difference" (*Feminism* 60). She further underlines that continuity is only to be found in a sphere replete with *heterarchical* and unranked dissimilitude:

> When this framework of discontinuity is discarded, we can see that the major marks of the mental, and of what is supposedly distinctive of the human, do not support a picture in which nature is alien but rather one in which nature can be recognized as akin to the human; human difference, like that of other species, appears against an overall background of kinship, forming a web of continuity and difference. (137)

In fact, solid human-nonhuman kinship—a schoolhouse harmoniously crammed with students and animals alike, as we see in Arnow's narrative for instance—is only possible, provided all life be recognized to occur and thrive in a sphere of "positive otherness" (Gaard and Murphey 6). If not so, "one risks experiencing the other only in terms of one's own needs, wants, desires" (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 202), or, according to a more 'arrogant' form of love, an approach that is well incarnated by the novel's main character's hunting impulse.

In addition, the recognition of multiple and interlacing "positive otherness" reminds me of Braidotti's concept of philosophical nomadism, which states that "the subject is fully immersed and immanent in a network of non-human (animal, vegetable, viral) relations" ("Metamorphoses" 122). Friedman goes as far as to suggest that identity is mostly formed by "relationships to particular others", be them indeed animal, human, or vegetal (quoted in Card 164). Given that all forms of encounter or intersection yield (un)ethical meaning, I argue that a moral stance growing towards social and political justice cannot persist if not in alliance with a compatibly strong land ethics. As I mention in my third chapter, fiction has the power to catch and fully display this emergence of individual identity from larger relational networks. From a more practical standpoint, Plumwood calls for the individual awakening of an "ecological self" (146) and for the shaping of a "social self" (*Feminism* 159). These forms of 'selves', or being, are very closely interspersed with one another, as the author further notes that "the social self salutes the social other as another self, a centre of subjectivity like mine but a different one" (idem). Thus, the ways in which one respects or acknowledges another human self must reflect the ways in which one salutes the nonhuman other as another centre of subjectivity, and an intersection of oppressions may be answered by an intersection or structure of shared liberation(s). What follows is that in an ecologically sensible community "caring about 'earth others' is, in this reflexive and non-anthropocentric way, also 'caring about oneself'" (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 187).

How are these ideas of multiplicity and individuation transposed to the field of feminist ecocriticism, the reader might ask. In her article "Feminist Ecocriticism: The New Ecofeminist Settlement", Opperman argues that an emergent field of feminist ecocriticism should rest on the 'posthuman imperative' that there is a "different constitution between humans and nonhumans"— or between all forms of terrestrial life (69). The acceptance of difference matters "in the interconnections of human and nonhuman spheres" (idem) and must thus be better rewoven into our textual fabrics. Now, as I principally explore in my third chapter, one of the techniques of textually portraying this diversity or multiplicity, and its emergent relational/dialogical aspect, without subduing the individuality/distinction of each being, is the bestowment of narrative agenthood to a larger array of represented characters, both human and nonhuman. In truth, Greta Gaard formulates some basilar questions that must guide author as well as reader in our literary pursuits: "how does this text handle the problem of speaking for other species? Does the text depict other animal species as passive agents who need human saviors, or does the text depict the agency of other animal species?" ("New Directions" 9). As

we find in *Hunter's Horn*, the attributed subjectivity and textual individuality of 'nonhuman characters', not only favours the ways in which animals are represented, it allows for different, and ecologically more compelling, forms of human-nature, or body-nature relationships/intersectionality.[56]

Another aspect that is often forwarded in more 'political ecofeminist' as well as feminist ecocritical accounts is the inclusion of care ethics into our moral systems, and the enlargement of the scope of those benefitting from our performative values. For further expounding what this practice of "care" means and how its narrative representation might be of advantage for my present purposes, I draw from an alternative ethical system, abundantly discussed by feminist thinkers and psychologists. Even though woven in an overriding anthropocentric and somewhat essentialist framework, it can still help significantly in attuning the 'eco-social' self. A practice of care, kindness, love, respect and solidarity, in a contextualized and relational way, is the keystone of the broader ethical system that ecofeminist philosophers propose. It embodies a gamut of moral precepts which, even though conventionally shrugged off as too abstract, relative, or underdeveloped, remains still today not weighed properly into our contemporary environmental praxis, or foregrounded in our cultural productions. On the other hand, this paradigm has been dismissed by critics mainly for two reasons. Firstly, an ethics of care is often attacked on its abstract or non-universal quality. In Tronto's words, this system is commonly claimed as constituting "moral left-overs" ("Beyond Gender" 654) that, in different milieus, do adopt a distinctive meaning or weight. Secondly, such ethics are often presented in a garment of biological determinism. By calling this alternative paradigm the 'feminine ethic' or by ascribing the practice of care and nurturance to inherent femininity, feminists and ecofeminists seem to have set up another self-inflicting trap, reifying the essentialist tendencies they primarily roam against. Instead, as Cuomo alerts, feminist ethics should not be misconstrued as "feminine ethics" (*Ecological Communities* 39).

On the practice of care, Carol Gilligan has been a notable authority. Even though the author has underscored that her proposed moral system is not inherent, but empirically related to gender categories (2), at times, some of her ideas dangerously incline towards a deterministic

[56] The representation of non-hierarchical difference or body-boundaries may emphasize, as Gaard remarks, relationality and what it has to offer to the process of identity making, illuminating "relationships among humans across a variety of social, cultural, economic, and political differences, and between humans and the rest of nature, exploring the ways that these human relationships shape our relationships to nature—to our own embodiment as nature" ("Strategies" 47).

abyss, as she sets out to weave the fabric of a distinctly feminine moral development.[57] Though I can understand Gilligan's impetus of unearthing an alternative and non-male biased theory of moral development, I must also recognize that one of the subjacent dangers of her reasoning lies in failing to objectively discern "whatever gets associated with women (…) as feminine" (Cuomo, *Ecological Communities* 57). In fact, as depicted in *Hunter's Horn*, a practice of care is embraced by male figures as well. Hence, as a way of surmounting these critical obstacles I could not agree more with Tronto who observes that a feminist ethic "should be centered not in discussions of gender differences" ("Beyond Gender" 645) but on the adequacy of its principles, given the expanded agenda of ecofeminist politics. On the other hand, while the association of nurture-values to femininity may, in truth, further warrant female domestic confinement (Moody-Adams quoted in Cuomo, *Ecological Communities* 57), I equally believe one cannot simply turn a blind eye to the scope of values that, in the unfolding of history, a domestic endeavour has put forth.

Thus, evading any gender reductionist or stereotypical trap, Plumwood discusses the relational and dialogical self. What is known in philosophical terms as egoism, self-interest, or utilitarianism can and should coexist with altruism, understood here as the genuine, selfless interest in another's flourishing. Any moral system designed to englobe both human and nature's maximum wellbeing cannot live through if not for a well-balanced contemplation or representation of both. According to Plumwood, "my welfare or satisfaction may be essentially connected to the thriving of a particular set of ecosystems, (…) just as much as to the thriving of human kin" (*Feminism* 151). Indeed, the wish for the other's well-being does not necessarily hamper or eliminate my own. Cuomo reminds us that "the flourishing of others may ultimately serve one's own flourishing, or the flourishing of one's own community or species" (*Ecological Communities* 65). As chapter three evinces, the 'narrative self' that persists in being disembodied and detached denies "the [expanding] social and connected nature of the self" (Plumwood, *Feminism* 152).

In literary terms, however, the representation and development of care ethics must be achieved with caution. Whereas such representation may illuminate, in the text inasmuch as in real life, ethical interrelationships between humans and nonhuman animals, the caring entities/characters should not become exploited under their at times *unrecognized*,

[57] Gilligan's conclusions point to a distinctly female moral approach, grounded in relational and nonviolent values, as opposed to the more conventional Western association of morality to justice, equality, and fairness (20). See also Walker.

uncelebrated endeavours. Cuomo's concept of "epistemically rich perspectives" (*Ecological Communities* 58), one that permeates my arguments along this piece, begins to explore the complexly layered significance of care practices and their portrayal more attentively. If care ethics, often linked to (female) domestic or maternal obligations/expectations, are to be prominently included in narratives, and if ecological/social value is to be gleaned from such 'performances', literary texts or their study should equally reflect or explore their historically more compromised aspect (of care practices)—namely their cultural or economic effacement.[58] As I argue below, Arnow succeeds at once in catching the value and ambivalence of such moral purviews, by contrasting their often intra-narrative neglect or invisibility with the quasi-heroic thrust that the novel's 'domestic vein' ultimately leads. Personally, on another note, and regarding the formulation of 'eco-masculinities', I also find that care practices could at times be portrayed in a more genderless fashion, thereby dissociating inherited constructions of masculinism from violent, detached, or destructive motivations/forms of behaviour.

Additionally, Gilligan herself defines her ethic of care as "a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative" rather than atomistic (19). In truth, perceiving "a world comprised of relationships rather than of people standing alone, a world that coheres through human connection rather than through systems of rules" (Gilligan 29), whereto I would add, perceiving a world comprised of relationships established far beyond 'human signposts', encapsulates a quintessential facet lacking from our traditional conception of morality and modes of narrative representation.[59] In agreement, Plumwood postulates that:

> The view of the self as a closed system only accidentally involved in relationships with others and of the ultimate desires of the individual as self-contained gives a misleading picture of the world which omits or impoverishes the most significant dimension of social experience (*Feminism* 153).

Hence, the conscious understanding of the vast enchainment of all life alerts us, or fictional characters for that matter, to the needs of others, inasmuch as it restrains, or eliminates certain human intentions, wants, or habits not congruent with the concept of altruistic and overarching

[58] This is, to a certain extent what I aim for here, recognize the heroic aspect of women's silenced efforts and community labour/sustenance, trace its existence to contextual factors such as the division of labour, and, ultimately, unearth a range of values or possibilities that are ecologically as well as individually promising (to the characters themselves).

[59] However, I must recognize these notions of human-nonhuman relationality to be actively challenged in contemporary nature writing; Richard Powers' *Overstory* or Robert Macfarlane's body of nonfiction work are good examples.

well-being. The self that is distinct but related, individual yet in communion, and empathically attuned to the qualities as well as shortcomings of others, incarnates a self that is potentially 'socio-ecological'.[60]

This potentially awakened 'self' overturns, as mentioned above, our ways of loving that are enwrapped in tiers of instrumental intention/expectation. Cuomo envisages how much entangled our everyday simple acts of loving, caring, appreciating or admiring become with certain motives that pertain to the wish of the self exclusively, a product of our markedly Western liberal ideology (*Ecological Communities*). The line between utilitarianism and being able to value non-instrumentally is, in fact, a tenuous one. Yet, the seeds of awareness may eventually lead to a more healthy and democratic negotiation of the self-other dynamics. In Cuomo's words: "instances of instrumental valuing often provide the knowledge and motivation that lead us to value non-instrumentally" (*Ecological Communities* 64), particularly regarding those 'others' with whom we do not share emotional or affective proximity. Following this line of thought, Erica Fudge has concurred that, in a literary context, "reading anthropocentrism can begin to uproot the possibility of its existence" (*Perceiving Animals* 105). If we succeed to act, love or even write in a non-instrumental, non-arrogant way, we will come to know glimpses of another in a radically different manner, for "non-instrumental valuing pays attention to the interests of the thing apart from the interests of the valuer, though these might coincide" (Cuomo, *Ecological Communities* 64).

Ultimately, when opening a moral paradigm to concepts such as care, friendship, responsibility, or empathy, they must always be understood, represented, or performed in a situated context.[61] Warren suggests that theory building must encompass a fabric "of entities located in different historical circumstances" (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 99), precisely because "there is no context-independent knowledge" or experience (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 164). The more inclusive, yet attentively situated, our theory, field of praxis or criticism becomes, the better we can curb the dominative structures laid out in this chapter. On the other hand, Tronto underlines the need for contextuality quite well when she affirms that care is much dependent on "one's moral

[60] Consider also what both Gaard and Murphy call "interanimation", congruent with a number of practices, theoretical frameworks or religions such as Buddhism, Deep Ecology, Animism, and some practices of Native American spirituality (7). I have deliberately refrained from using the Buddhist concepts of impermanency, connectedness of all reality, and the Bodhisattva ideal of care/compassion for individual/collective liberation, given that some ecofeminist authors have been criticized for decontextualizing Buddhist-oriented solutions and beliefs.

[61] Owain Jones and William Lynn have both criticized moral or ethical systems as working "ageographically" that is, they deal with "the realm of the generalized and the universal" (Jones 274).

imagination, character, and actions [which] must respond to the complexity of a given situation" ("Beyond Gender" 658). Indeed, the solidarity that is represented in Arnow's mountain communities is not at all the type of care I can gift to my community, even though it does mirror a motivational image that is, at its core, very much similar: a concern with the moral value/good of another.

This is, in my view, one of the many points where Gilligan's theory falls short. A loving and caring form of kinship should not be solely devised or depicted in a gendered framework, but in a context-dependent one, what I called above as "epistemically rich perspectives" (*Ecological Communities* 58). Cuomo points, for instance, to the third world women farmers who, even though not acknowledged by those in a position of power, develop a burgeoning and distinct intimacy with the land they work on. As we see in *Hunter's Horn*, this possible deeper bond hardens not so much because their moral development *as women* is different from that of their male counterparts', but because their relationship with the land is, according to a specific social and local context, construed differently. It is, hence, quintessential that a textual representation of care ethics be well situated and narratively explored. Indeed, as I intimated above, in Arnow's fiction, since they inhabit a geographical terrain that garners spatial fluidity, women occupy a mediating position in between various communities, mainly through forms of heroic domestic performance. That way, the ecofeminist lens I propose for the analysis of Arnow's work ultimately embodies what Engelhardt has considered as an Appalachian proto-ecofeminist web of values (Engelhardt, *Tangled Roots*), where the mechanisms of domination hitherto presented are indeed at play, yet calibrated differently, ingeniously tinted by the female and covert attempts of reaching personal sublimation and transgression. Whereas, in the end, I concur that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house", to use Audre Lorde's fine expression, my aim in the following two chapters is to recognize and celebrate the ways in which the 'master's structure' can often be creatively bent, evaded and transformed, even if not thoroughly demolished.

Conclusion

Should anyone still be left with any doubt as to why it is my imperative to validate and contribute to a more harmonious exchange between humans and non-human life, or more precisely, the reason why a singular tree, animal, or lake should earn our respect, be safeguarded, and defended, one can indeed argue, as I did in this chapter, that caring for nature is ultimately caring for ourselves. Yet, if we do want to detach the 'self-factor' from that proposition, and consider care as an impersonally and altruistic feeling, one must recall the

teleological aspect of nature. Truthfully, as Plumwood avers, subjective intentionality is not a factor that "marks off the human, the mental, or even the animate" (*Feminism* 135). Along with the author, I am of the opinion that the mind/culture and body/nature set of dualisms can only be erased from our ways of construing reality as soon as we start paying attention to the purposeful trajectories of different lives, unfurling around us. Plumwood presents an eloquent example of what acknowledging telos in nature is:

> Mountains, for example, present themselves as the products of a lengthy unfolding natural process, having a certain sort of history and direction as part of this process, and with a certain kind of potential for change. Trees appear as self-directing beings with an overall 'good' or interest and a capacity for individual choice in response to their conditions of life. (Plumwood, *Feminism* 136)

Cuomo shares a similar approach as she maintains that "each thing has a 'good' that is identifiable and distinguishable, each strives towards its good when it has the freedom to do so, and that good, that quiddity, must, in the end, be 'valued and respected for its own sake'" (*Ecological Communities* 51). As Meister Eckhart has marvellously expressed, even stones may know love, "a love that seeks for the ground" (quoted in Matthews 61).

Hence, as a way of exploring the 'ecofeminist quilt' (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*), I set out, in the first section of this chapter, by illustrating the pernicious ways in which domination and oppression function, and how, from this adopted standpoint of philosophical ecofeminism, these mechanisms are believed to be rooted in our Western dualistic modes of construing/perceiving reality. In addition, as ecofeminism studies the subjection of women and nature, it also proved essential to include a brief investigation of the historical and conceptual connections between women and nature, and how this association aided the subjugation of both entities. In this last section, I focused on how to overturn these hierarchical relationships, by dwelling on what some ecofeminist authors have called the awakening of a 'social' and 'ecological self'. I purposefully intertwined this corrective and more political aspect with literary techniques or mechanisms, as a way of bridging theory or criticism with practice and individual growth. As we saw, most of the considerations from 'care ethics', to the importance of individual distinction, or to the aspect of relationality, easily find their equivalents in literary construction and interpretation. They are, as I stated previously, mutually enforcing. This form of self, which is indelibly present in Arnow's narratives, strives toward the dissipation of all

prejudicial power relationships through intersubjective or mutual valuation; it is of those beings who love in a non-arrogant or utilitarian way and who reap the joy of knowing a particular locale/environment.

To conclude I want to refer to the inspiring words of Australian author Deborah Bird Rose, a collector of aboriginal knowledge, whose ethnographic interest branched into a deeper ecological awareness. In her *Nourishing Terrains,* Rose illustrates precisely what I expounded in this chapter: how a concern for human others can easily branch out and meet the needs of the land. In other words, the writer illuminates the measure in which ecological and human/cultural realities thoroughly enmesh and complement each other: "there are ecological relationships of care, social relationships of care and spiritual relationships of care" (49), yet the aboriginal peoples "talk about a holistic system, and [they] say that if you are doing the right thing ecologically, the results will be social and spiritual as well as ecological" (49). This notion is somehow not lost on the various female Appalachian authors that I have read. Not surprisingly, Appalachia is, after all, according to Engelhardt (*The Tangled Roots*), one of the corners of American literary imagination where environmentalism first entangled with a fundamental social/gender consciousness. As my ensuing chapters bring to light, in defying cultural impositions, women often turned to the nonhuman sphere, as a wellspring of contextually based teachings, understanding, and compassion.

Chapter 2: Women and the Land, An "Arcadian Ecology"

I am not the Wheatfield
Nor the virgin forest
I never chose this place
Yet I am of it now
(Adrienne Rich, "From an Old House is America")

> There is a world there, and the world is very much alive because it is made of living things, people who are so grown into their farm and its crops that whether they take their life from the land or the land takes its life from them is a hard thing to say. (Arnow, letter to Strauss 2-3)

Anyone who happens upon the work of Appalachian author Harriette Simpson Arnow (1908-1986) quickly realizes how much her love for—and indeed profound understanding of—the land inspirits her writing and imagination. Wilton Eckley captures this deep affection when he affirms that "the Cumberland River, it and the land that it waters, are still very much a part of her" (*Harriette Arnow* 17). In *Seedtime on the Cumberland* (1985) a work blending memoir with local history, Arnow herself points to the most prominent factors that shaped the people she calls her own: "the land and the Cumberland" (4).[62] This profound attachment to nature engenders a thoroughly place-based understanding or knowledge of the Southern Appalachian Mountains and its people. Indeed, as Martha Billips underlines, a strong critique against the despoilment of the soil, and degrading industrial technologies, permeates the entirety of Arnow's work. Coupled to the critique of land desecration is one sharply aimed at the dualistic gender divide which obstructs in multiple ways the wellbeing and flourishing of individual women.

In the introduction to her work *Bloodroot, Reflections of Place by Appalachian Women Writers*, Joyce Dyer queries: "how can we shed the common notion that Appalachian women are a homogenous group of dependent, submissive females, small filler beads in extended families, victims of intensely patriarchal men?" (1). Bearing in mind Dyer's question, I make it the

[62] The 'Cumberland' refers to the Cumberland Plateau, a 'geological segment' of the Appalachian Mountains that extends from New York to Alabama, encompassing the state of the fictitious Little Smokey community. For more information on the geography as well as geological composition of this segment consult "Geology and History of the Cumberland Plateau".

purpose of this chapter, apart from acquainting the reader with Arnow's work, to illustrate how her remarkably clear-cut female characters, while still operating in over-populated family clusters and under a strong patriarchal tether, reach well beyond the limits of those stereotypical notions. I further consider the female protagonist's role in Arnow's novel *Hunter's Horn* and investigate to what extent it may pertain to Annette Kolodny's concept of the 'American Eve', emerging in the literary imaginary. In addition, I will illustrate how the deep intimacy and interaction with the land substantiates a paramount facet of women's embodiments and 'intersubjectivities' that have either been erroneously distorted, as suggested by Dyer, or else, entirely subsumed under the 'historical' male-dominated literary voice. In fact, when regarding the broadly encompassing genre of American nature writing, one is reminded of Anderson's ominous question: "where were the women's voices?" (1). Towards the end of this chapter, I elucidate how women's individual experiences and interconnections with the land are portrayed as attuned to bioregional principles of balance and subsistence, as well as to an alternative and ecofeminist discourse of 'emplacement', strongly grounded in the nation's founding myths. By arguing this, I am not at all claiming that only female characters seem to weave interrelationships with the land: the male protagonist, albeit at times alienated, finds a form of personal tranquilization and sublimation in the pastoral quality of the outdoors as well; yet it is the purpose of this chapter to examine female characters' forms of place construal and how they may remain in touch with a specific ideal of past.

Harriette Arnow: An Introduction to the Author

For Arnow, the very craft of composing and telling stories, revolving the imagination and kneading memories, is inextricably bound to the perpetually unfolding 'land story'. The weaving of her stories becomes as pondered and valuable as her admiration for, and investment in the land. As Wendell Berry would put it, Arnow "lives in [her] subject" ("The Making" 4), for her writing demands an attuning of the senses, a textual preservation of the rich palimpsest of colour, sound, and texture found in the variety of Appalachian wildlife. In a striking passage from her *Seedtime on the Cumberland*, Arnow describes the process of rendering strands of ideas and memories into fictional narratives as an exercise of deep listening to "all sounds [that] came clearly up from the hidden world below us like sound heard through water" (16). Furthermore, her narrative composition is palpably earth-sensitive, organic, or as some critics have commented, exuding an 'unfinished' scent,[63] lending her narrative *locus* and economy to motley forms of life. The author further affirms that "it was in the gray stillness with the smell

[63] See Joyce Carol Oats' afterword to Arnow's *The Dollmaker*.

of cedar, of wet earth, and the fainter smell of decaying limestone all about me, that I remade the memories as I wanted them to be" (idem). Gary Snyder comes to mind as he envisions inhabiting or writing place as an exercise of "revisualizing (…) smells and textures, walking through it again in your imagination" (28). Aside from reverentially bringing to life the place and local ecology, the concoction of these stories and reminiscences would, in later years, prompt Arnow to compose the sort of narratives that jolt readers out of their preordained states of mind, clashing with the repository of mountain life stereotypes introduced above.

What is more, the author knits a narrative world which, though set in the Appalachian hinterland, mirrors the deep incongruities of human nature and social organization, especially as perceived during the turbulent post-Great Depression era (Bogardus and Hobson 2).[64] Indeed, critics have both dubbed her an agrarian writer, in the likes of a Southern Renaissance William Faulkner or Robert Penn Warren, and a proletarian novelist, lending her expression to the defence of the poor and working masses, as best manifested in her famous *The Dollmaker* (1954).[65] Denying both these labels, Arnow's sole aim was, perhaps, in the words of Engelhardt, to acknowledge that "Appalachian strengths [were] American strengths; Appalachian problems [were] American problems" (*Tangled Roots* 13) and that fostering a particular identity or world vision which pays deference to local human/non-human others could ultimately become beneficial to the entire nation.

In addition, parallel to Arnow's love for nature, runs an endeavour to the liberation of the 'mountain woman', both from the hefty burden of patriarchal domination and the stereotypically uncouth, illiterate, lazy and primitive garment that has long ensconced her true individuality. Whereas it holds true that various American literary "regionalisms" have offered a podium for female writers' expression, as Mellicent Bell, or Glenda Hobbs have both argued,[66] women have abundantly figured both behind and within Appalachian fiction (Miller 1). However, as stated in my introduction, regional fiction has, also, unmistakably imbued

[64] Authors such as Lionel Thrilling and Kazin argue that the Great Depression materialized a "literary sociology" (quoted in Bogardus and Hobson 2) that marks a turning point in the history of US literature. Such crossroads envisioned writing as an "expression of belief" (2) in an array of left-inclined political values. This ideological aspect is notably infused in Arnow's *Hunter's Horn*, as she voices and defends the struggles of a rural/agrarian society, or in *The Dollmaker*, when presenting a strong proletariat-conscious position.

[65] The Southern Renaissance was a movement aimed at the 're-strengthening' of southern literature, which developed at the turn of 1930's. Some famous authors of the Southern Renaissance were William Faulkner (1897-1962), Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989), Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938), Elizabeth Madox (1881-1941), Eudora Welty (1909-2001) or Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960).

[66] Some of the most notable American and local colourists or regionalists were indeed women: Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909), Mary Austin (1868-1934), Mary Murfree (1850-1922), Kate Chopin (1850-1904) are some examples.

Appalachian women with hazardous stereotypes.[67] Of course, the integrity of representation depends in great part on the intention and identity of the writer, whether s/he is or not native to the region, and to what purpose their work speaks. Following that line of thought, tradition has shown male or overall non-native authors capture women's lives, struggles, and mindscapes not as female or native writers possibly can. On the other hand, Miller stresses that local colour authors such as Marie Murfree, whom Shapiro has identified as a major culprit behind the cultural "otherness of Appalachia" ("Local Color" 20), have stirred up an over-idealized image of the Southern Appalachian Mountains and its communities mainly for market purposes. According to Miller's critique, Murfree has furnished "ethereally beautiful heroines" (1) that are in no way similar to Arnow's painfully realistic portrayals of mountain life. Meanwhile, even if it may be true, as Sandra Ballard observes, that *Hunter's Horn* employs, at times, condescending stereotypes, these are by no means the legs upon which Arnow's narrative stands (150). They were often added upon editorial advice,[68] or, as Kohler contends, included for espousing or intensifying a sense of place and identity (quoted in Miller 79). As Engelhardt accentuates, though certain local colour works may have been harmful in terms of stereotypes, they contain, nonetheless, an early form of gender and environmental sensibility that shaped a collective "rural, working class" (*Tangled Roots* 12) attuned to issues both social and ecological.

Truthfully, as I intimated in my introduction, Arnow expresses a motivation of rendering the local universally relevant, prefiguring the 'situated epistemology' that ecofeminism would decades later postulate: knowledge and experience germinates and further irradiates from the local. As Billips eloquently observes in her article "The Writer and the Land", Arnow's concern genuinely departs from the preservation of local and intermeshing ecosystems (forests, rivers and lakes). Indeed, in her introduction to *Mountain Path,* Arnow mourns the deadening of the Cumberland Lake waters or the erosion and deforestation caused by mountain top removal (xii). She attributes these ecological hazards to a larger chain of a typically American ideology, one erected upon ideals of relentless profit and produce, what Plumwood would call "the

[67] Sidney Sailor Farr's *Appalachian Women: An annotated Bibliography* (2014) contains an excellent assemblage of texts and oral histories around Appalachian (fictional) women. Furthermore, Weatherford W. D. and Wilma Dykeman's "Literature since 1900", even though not complete, offers a clear synthesis of Appalachian fiction in the 20th century, some of it produced by women.

[68] Letters exchanged between Arnow and her editors show, for instance, how the titles of her works were changed, and some stereotypes added to the narrative, purely for economic purposes. Buyers expect an over-romanticized image that is congruent with the 'otherness' of the region itself. Additionally, the author's *Between the Flowers* remained unpublished until 1997, as the narrative was deemed too introspective, not centred enough on elements of action. See further Harrison's "Mountain path: Writing Beyond Mountain Stereotypes".

religion of progress" (*Feminism* 101).[69] As Arnow prominently illustrates in her non-fiction work, a healthy lake or river furnishes a healthy ecosystem; a healthy ecosystem, in turn, emplaces a better flourishing social community.

Furthermore, Arnow is keen on bringing to life those who have met history unsung. In a lecture given in 1966 at the 94th annual meeting of the Historical Society of Michigan, the author confesses her general disillusionment with the thrust American historiography has taken: "I comforted myself with thoughts that when I studied history in school, I would learn how ordinary people such as my own had lived" ("Historical Society" 251). She grew indeed deeply discomfited with the failed attempts at finding the place-based knowledge, which, much like with her own fictional characters, thoroughly delineated her sense of reality since early childhood. A deeper and yet more harrowing absence from the recordings of history and the arts is that of the poor rural and working-class woman, and more specifically, the hardships and ordinary joys of her day-to-day life.

In that sense, Arnow's literary achievements embody an intertwined and threefold purpose, celebrating the literary visibility of a bioregion and its people, specifically its women, while complexly cross-stitching different forces of oppression (Eckley, *Harriette Arnow*). In fact, an in-sweeping tide of a "homogenizing Americanness", or what Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emmerson have coined as "semiotic totalitarianism" (28), has exacerbated the patriarchal edifice women are subjected to. As I shortly develop below, a southern pastoral vision of order and harmony, is encased in between the "pull towards progress and the grip of the past" (MacKethan 9). The capitalist and industrial North's pressing on the southern region's threshold has not only fomented such arcadian believes but contributed indirectly to perpetuate a mindset of stagnant complacency, especially contrite for local marginalized identities. In *Hunter's Horn*, Suse Ballew, who at this narrative point is twelve years old and keenly insightful, marvellously grasps this overlapping of domineering ideologies, as she recollects her parents' growing place-attachment: "they had not seemed to Suse like her father and mother of the daytime, but two children, Nunn and Milly, hardly stronger than herself, two timid children playing house in some secret place where the bigger, rougher children would not find it and tear it down" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 32).

[69] In his online article "Technology and the Democratic Ideal: The Search for a Middle Landscape", Mahoney illustrates how this idea of progress embodies a distinctly American trope. From a pastoral perspective, the author argues that progress, especially associated to technological production and manufacturing, may ultimately play against the improvement and well-being of the people, a vision that is corroborated in *Hunter's Horn.*

On the other hand, as included in Herb E. Smith's documentary *Harriette Simpson Arnow: 1908-1986,* Arnow expresses a deep sympathy with those who, performing the difficult tasks of domesticity, are publicly devalued as 'mere housewives', relegated to a private and backgrounded realm. As a good portion of her fictional work revolves around a dissipating agricultural frontier, her narratives convey the merits of house/farm work, and, as I will elucidate, in a critically subversive manner. On the other hand, in line with Ruth Schwartz's main argument in *More Work for Mother*, Arnow celebrates the infinitesimal bits of knowledge such a field of work may both espouse and require. In fact, as I argue below, the specific diegetic weight and economy provided to a female discourse/experience in *Hunter's Horn* ultimately helps render domesticity as a heroic enterprise, supplanting the hunting narrative. A particular form of domestic knowledge, in conjunction with a praxis of friendship and care, gains new and valuable meaning, what Carol Ganim underscores as the "feminist awareness and discourse" present in Arnow's work (266). Yet, critics have neglected the widening of the scope 'community'or 'domestic circle' by grossly disregarding *Hunter's Horn's* melange of nonhuman others.

I will start my analysis of the contextual woman-land connection, that appears, in the Appalachian context, deeply entangled with the American myth of the frontier and its primitive state of wilderness. Due to this magnetizing frontier's narrative, Arnow's individual female characters struggle between strong emotional force fields. They are as if jostled back and forth between a sense of nostalgia, deeply rooted in a specific place and its mythology, and a hardening desire for emancipation, a form of 'freedom-from'. In a short story preceding the composition of her novels, titled "Zekie the Hillbilly Mouse" (1939), this key paradox seems to find its inception. Its main characters, a family of mice, thoroughly naturalized to their place, who communicate with the 'play of elements', find themselves in a painstaking dilemma: a practical and financial need/desire for the economic opportunities beckoning from beyond the mountainous horizon is nevertheless counter balanced by their strong ties to the mountainous landscape, its rivers, trees, and animals. This pattern can be traced in Arnow's larger fiction as well. *Hunter's Horn*'s pre-adolescent Suse, for instance, wishes to escape her community, yet remains spellbound to what taught her most about freedom in the first place: nature in constant movement. In *The Dollmaker,* Gertie's strenuous adaptation to urban life conflicts with her personal fulfilment and growth. On another note, this particular short story, inhabited by anthropomorphised animals, not only furnishes a narrative 'life-inclusive' vision that permeates her later work, it also stresses a way of being highly relational to place and nature,

yielding, as Billips suggests, “a sense of spiritual insight and continuity seldom found in modern literature or in modern life” (470).

These tensions further erupt when Arnow, while actively seeking for a strong social revision, equally mourns the encroaching loss of this particular life stance/identity, and an ode to the rugged wilderness of the mountains becomes at once a celebration of its people and their ‘mythic’ interrelationships with spatial reality. Hence, the author wavers between her pledge to local history, paying homage to all its traditionalisms and folklore, and a more critical assertiveness, a sharp acerbity that flags certain cultural practices as harmful to both women and the land. An intense sense of nostalgia or idealization of the past, entailing both its positive and less positive facets, touches, as Kolodny has extensively argued, upon the myth of the American frontier and its settlement: the United States’ most prolific national narrative of place-making. As critic Theda Wrede observes, in Appalachian context, there is a coalescence of time and place, as “the past is very much a part of the present” (61) and, as I will argue below, intercedes, or makes itself manifest, through physical landscape.

Indeed, Wilton Eckley observes that remote Appalachian communities were not defined by a form of spatial or temporal separatism as is customary today: “the past did not recede so rapidly into remoteness” (*Harriette Arnow* 22). This sets forth, as I will argue, a re-imagination or re-experience of a mythology that harks back to the frontier man/woman’s first encounter with wilderness. As I underlined before, combining memory with imagination engendered for Arnow a ‘creative confusion’, akin to her characters’ particular comprehension of temporal dimensions. She thus affirms: “true, there was confusion; the past, the present, and the stories I was beginning to read were all mingled in my head” (Arnow, *Seedtime* 16). Hence, Arnow’s usage and recreation of national myths, pinned to a very specific locale, encapsulates a twofold purpose: it embodies the desirous protection of an “alternative way of life instead of passively merging with the mainstream” (Whisenent xvi), while it equally demonstrates how certain patterns, etched in the commonly devalued area of “the regional” (Berry, “Regional Motive” 37), acquire great significance in a larger context. When in her *Between the Flowers*, Arnow writes, “his anger was like Dorie’s sighs, not meant for one or a thousand acres of land and trees, but for the whole of Kentucky, or the nation, or maybe the world” (224), she ingeniously intermeshes a local sensitivity with a concern for the universal.

Even though Appalachian historians and critics have long officially sealed and left behind the concept of frontier as physical boundary (Inscoe xiv), as to forestall further marginalization of

the region, traces of its mythology/lore still inflate and give form to Arnow's fictional Appalachian communities in the first half of the 20th century. I employ the concept of myth here in the way Slotkin envisions it, an assemblage of "stories drawn from a society's history that have acquired through persistent usage the power of symbolizing that society's ideology" (quoted in Bessetti-Reyez xix). Without reifying the derogative primitivism that has long been identified with these communities—considered America's 'yesterday's people'—Arnow's characters are not separated from their past generations and heritage, indebted in great part to geographical reasons (Trout 3).[70] That is why perhaps, in commentary of *Hunter's Horn's* complex array of characters, John Unrue has asserted that "the Ballew family and their neighbors are not literary contrivances or novelties, but descendants of the past" (36).[71]

According to Trout, the physical protuberance, elevation, and enclosure of the mountains offers an embosoming protection that demarcates Appalachian identity (2). In tandem, Cooper, Knotts and Livingston, in their study "Appalachian identity and Policy Opinions" have identified a positive correlation between the exuberant physical landscape, and the population's sense of place and willingness to recognize/preserve the well-being of the land (35). While Arnow's narrative vision thoroughly corroborates these statements, she is nevertheless able to identify the ambivalent facet and phenomenological conditions of this type of terrain: how it foments a strong atavistic predilection. In that sense, as I show below, a certain myth is projected onto space, deeply animated within geography itself, and conditions, as Joan Griffin observes, the survival of these communities (102). The extremities of nature congeal a cultural identity that mythicizes an idea of primitive garden, while remaining profoundly patriarchal. As we see in the following chapter, women are largely destitute of the freedom and command even of their own bodies. This is indeed an expressly negative aspect of the blurring of the nature/culture boundary, as it may warrant the continuous power-exercise of a predominantly male ruling class. Aware of the complex meaning of nature, and the thrall it casts upon the lives and identities of her characters, Arnow's *Hunter's Horn* evinces a strong female re-imagination of the American primordial garden and its different forms of construal.

That means that, to a certain extent, Arnow's characters move in imagined and symbolical geographies. A terrain that encodes a relic of both the male and female settler's acute necessity

[70] On the other hand, Appalachian people's sense of identity and of place are greatly influenced, Trout writes, by the duration of time one has spent or been settled in the mountains (3-4).

[71] Yet, neither do I see them as mere repetitions of a reductive prototypal mould, as Janice Ballew appears to defend; Arnow's characters are best defined by their unitary 'space-time connections', meaning they move in landscapes that bear, as I have argued in the introduction to this piece, genealogical and temporal value.

to come to terms with the unremitted "state of nature" (Kolodny, *The Lay* 56), or to find in wilderness a locus apt for personal value. However, this is not to say that the Kentucky farmer's love, respect, and gratitude is bestowed upon something merely illusive. What I mean is that the ubiquity of nature and geography is intricately enmeshed with a narrative of rugged adaptation, subsistence, survival, and confrontation, that crystalized from the pioneer's direct experience with the unknown right onto the early twentieth century Appalachian imaginary, thus espousing a hybrid form of "natureculture(s)" (Haraway, *Species*)—a conceptual interlacing of place, myth, and time. This form of interlacing is equally pointed out by Snyder, who sees the landscape as a living repository, blending nature together with myth and memory, or the "place-based stories people tell" (7). The characters' interactions with nature are partly propelled by a burgeoning myth around the braving or transformation of wilderness into habitable nature, or, as Lawrence Buell has insightfully put it, by replacing a conceptual vacancy of abstract space—a *Terra Nulius*—with meaningful and relatable place ("Space, Place" 63).

Hence, Arnow's different female characters, despite their shortcomings and hardships, continue to worship the mountains, because, in a way, they made their mountains, as much as they themselves are made of them. Deducing, as stated in my epigraph, how much "[rural farmers] take their life from the land or the land takes its life from them" (Arnow quoted in Billips 473) remains unanswerable. To Construe the land according to a specific myth that entails gendered overtones means, as I will explicate below, that the mountains of Arnow's female characters may not exactly be those of her male characters, and renders the Appalachian terrain, as Williams has correctly affirmed, a "historical, cultural, and gendered" space (quoted Mullins 21).

The American Frontier and Place-Based Experience

As is widely agreed today, Frederick Jackson Turner's keystone essay, "The Significance of the American Frontier" (1893), virtually excluded women from the journeys and hardships of pioneer life and distorted a vision of the American frontier that would contaminate the work of countless historians and writers (Walsh, "Re-imagining" 241). Since the undertaking of the frontier incarnates one of the best defining myths of the American character, it offers a playfield for masculine mythmaking (Walsh, "Re-imagining" 243) while avidly scrapping out the female voice. The celebration of women, however scanty, represents her as an obtuse or indeed larger-than-life being, cut from a one-dimensional mould (Riley 1). The "ordinary" pioneer woman's input and endeavours have been considered lackadaisical and not worthy of relating, against a

pervasive image of hero-like and male conquest. Similarly, in the early 18th and 19th centuries, the literary scene, as Anette Kolodny argued, rarely if ever, explored solid female characters, perpetuating the pattern of their either complete narrative omission or distortion. Nonetheless, when historians, greatly influenced by the burst of the 1960s second-wave feminist movements, set out to resurrect the frontier's woman from obscurity, they were met with rich threads and fragments of their domestic- and land-based experiences, and with the emergence of a recurrent pattern of non-exploitative relationships with wilderness.

As has only recently been put forward, in most of the early settler's communities, despite their high rates of precocious death or physical illness, women were "numerically visible and essential to survival" (Walsh, "Re-imagining" 244). Farming/household activities such as ploughing, sowing, planting, reaping, hoeing, canning, or tending after animals, were seldom "a going concern without female participation" (idem).[72] Additionally, domestic spaces, while being conventionally restrictive, were also, as Kristine Groover maintains, sites of a particularly female form of ceremony (24). Marilynn Robinson's *Housekeeping* (1980) for instance, has illustrated how the performative aspect of 'domestic ritual' could adopt both a blissfully fulfilling quality and a sense of rootedness. In fact, as Margaret Walsh has highlighted, certain tasks, and a particular mode of construing nature, were actively vindicated by the frontier's woman (244), both as a way to (re)create their sense of home, and as an antidote to increasing patriarchal 'corruption'. Moreover, according to Kolodny, whose work I use as critical foundation for this chapter, this reclaiming of the domestic realm and its enveloping garden space would eventually become fundamental for women's adaptation to, and familiarity with daunting wilderness.

The multi-layered and much debated concepts of wilderness and frontier, while being deeply entangled, require some further expounding, especially when they hold such claim over the significance of place in Arnow's work, or in a broader Appalachian imaginary. In her re-discovered work *The Spirit of the Mountains* (1905), Emma Bell Miles affirms that "only a superficial observer could fail to understand that the mountain people really love their wilderness" (17); yet, this sentiment of "love" is ambiguous. As I explained above, I purposefully employ the concept of frontier not so much in the sense of the nation's westward

[72] Osterud argues that not only during "European-American settlement" (19) were gender conventions sometimes and mildly 'suspended', but also the "balance between arable and pastoral elements in farming systems affected the degree to which women and men shared tasks" (idem). As illustrated in chapter 3, the tending for domestic animals was usually derogatively considered 'women's work', enabling them to substantially enlarge their domestic purviews.

geographical expansion, as in its entailing ideologies or relived mythology, amounting to what Groover describes as a continuous "twentieth-century incarnation of the frontier" (2).[73] Hence, the concept of wilderness is a highly disputed one. In the "American Wilderness Act" it is stated that "a wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain" (2). In that sense, the mobility of the frontier, or as ecofeminists would propose, the edifice of 'intrusive culture', is partially an act of repudiation against this concept of wilderness, which thus becomes symbolically linked to archaic primitiveness in a hierarchically inferior manner.[74]

Accordingly, Patricia Ross maintains that the American frontier "is usually viewed as a distinct entity from wilderness" (2), as the general imagination of its pastoral quality remains mostly incompatible with "the urge to conquer nature" or the uncongenial forces of such terrains (idem), stemming from a patriarchal and frontier's-like impulse. Nonetheless, as I have underlined above, the concept of wilderness has deeply found roots in the Southern Appalachian imaginary where it subsists and continues to define place-based experience (Bell Miles). As Bessetti-Reyes eloquently observes "the edge of a physical wooded wilderness can be the frontier" (xiv) and unquestionably does, as illustrated below, further rekindle its mythos. Hence, Arnow's work gains meaning in that it relocates her female characters either to the midst, or to the border of a real inasmuch as imagined wilderness, subverting not only the conceptual/cultural meaning of nature itself, but of women's gender performativity as well.

As a way of exploring the distinctively gendered approaches to frontier's life and American place-making, I will proceed by briefly analysing two of Annette Kolodny's seminal works that recreate settlers' interrelationships with the wild as developed in American literature. In her *The Lay of the Land, Metaphors as Experience in American Life and Letters* (1975), Kolodny proposes a psycho-historical interpretation of the North American continent's settlement. She sets out to examine how the male fantasy projected the newly discovered 'virginal lands' as a metaphorically rich, female, and motherly terrain. Simultaneously, as stated above, the American wilderness, a blank and outstretched *Terra Nulius*, fomented the

[73] Estella Lauter's visions on myth are particularly apt here: the author conceptualizes mythmaking as an expanding "contextual structure" and an 'exercise' that is ever generative (3).

[74] In his *Wilderness and the American Mind* (2014), Rodrick Nash envisions the realm of the wild as one of unruly confusion/bewilderment and declares: "the image is that of a man in an alien environment where the civilization that normally orders or controls his life is absent" (2). In the Appalachian context, the ubiquity of wilderness exacerbates the popular vision of the region as backwards, not fully converted or assimilated to mainstream values. Because of this, Appalachians are often called 'primitives' in a highly devalued manner, Mullins argues.

perfect atmosphere for a wave of European settlers much desirous of, as stated by D.H. Lawrence, "getting away" and starting over (9). What is more, the primordial and Eden-like quality of "a daily reality (…) between man and nature based on an experience of the land as essentially feminine—that is, not simply the land as mother, but the land as woman, the total female principle of gratification" (Kolodny, "The Lay" 4), welcomed and exacerbated not only a collective mentality of heedless exploitation, it also embodied a tract of settler fantasy/experience that could hardly be shared by women. Indeed, the American pristine verdure became the emblem of Europe's long-lost pastoral Arcadia; a site that, while warmly welcoming new narratives and myth formation, contributed greatly to Thomas Jefferson's envisioned "paradise of small farms (…) with every freeholder secure under his vine and fig tree" (Lynch 144)—a democratic image deeply embroidered by an ambiguous pastoral longing. In that sense, the remaining agrarian dream, one that notably transverses Arnow's literary imagination, may constitute a detriment of this primordial pastoral drive, an ethos of harmonious simplicity that the author captures at the dawn of an "oncoming tide of civilization" (Bell Miles 190). Ultimately, as I will demonstrate, pastoral or agrarian sublimity is endangered from the community within as much as from without, for the largely self-subsistent farmers Arnow brings to life may fall prey to a conquering motivation, a psychological vestige that both Kolodny and Marx consider one of America's greatest paradoxes.

Here it might be useful not only to expound how this idea of Arcadia comes about, but how its full achievement remains illusory, an impossibility, as Arnow herself seems to understand. From a broader American perspective, the Arcadian garden is represented by the intermediate or "middle landscape" (Marx, *The Machine* 71), an idealized fusion between "art and nature" (idem).[75] In *Hunter's Horn*, though urbanism, technology, and capitalism certainly know their way into the local community—the gravelled road being its fundamental symbol—it is the other inherent "counterforce", the state of "intractable nature" (Marx, *The Machine* 25) that menaces the stability and existence of this intermediate spatiality in the novel. This is to say, not always the specific characteristics of this state perforce, but the androcentric difficulty of accepting nature's imminent existence, the unwillingness, as I stated in the previous chapter, to share boundaries with this specific form of nature.

[75] As Torrance elucidates, pastoralism is linked to a deeper universal and timeless human urge 'of returning' to a period of greater oneness and interchangeability between human beings and the rest of the world. Indeed the "abundance of nature is a defining characteristic of the Golden Age" (xvii), and even the oldest of recorded civilizations expresses a collective yearning to return to this past state of natural profusion.

When analysing the historic cusp from a hunting and gathering economy to one of agricultural production, James Serpell has stated that "the entire system [of agriculture] depends on the subjugation of nature, and the domination and manipulation of living creatures" (275). This suggests, in part, the primal paradox referred to above: human flourishing depends, in some way or other, on the instrumental use of nature's resources. I argue that while a pastoral longing is indeed well fused in most of the novel's characters' desires to create a garden (or farm) of their own, the geographical conditions of the region, or wilderness, renders this impulse inchoate, or, in the words of Satterwhite a locally "complex pastoralism" (100).[76] I am reminded of one particular instance where with resignation and disgust, *Hunter's Horn's* characters must face the fact that, at times, in the valley, "the smell of death was stronger than the smell of flowers" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 254),[77] an image symbolic of those local forces that continuously assail bucolic life.

While a more conventional vein of American pastoralism has envisaged a rural territory as a possibility of escape from the hassle of urbanism, Leo Marx and others have investigated a form of literary pastoralism which, while more complex, englobes a central contradiction that is interwoven in the novel at hand. The 'middle landscape', artificial, crafted, impregnated with a thoroughly human, and often patriarchal longing, also engenders a form of stagnancy in time: it exists, as MacKethan maintains, somewhere in between the pull "towards progress and the gap of the past" (9). At the same time, as Mahoney contends, this Arcadian space is a "fitting scene for the reconciliation of the rational and the animal in humans".[78] Nevertheless, as the course of this dissertation aims to demonstrate, the degree of practical 'reconciliation' implicated may vary according to gender difference, and is influenced, indeed, by different frontier experiences or 'mythologies'. Truthfully, in *Hunter's Horn*, with wilderness earning such a prominent position in local and collective memory/mythmaking, as well as dauntingly embosoming the meagre patches of cultivated land, both male and female characters manage these complex symbolical territorialities distinctively: a female relational and intersubjective approach is at times counter-balanced by what in the previous chapter I called a 'power-over' identity quest, signalled mainly through the hunting narrative. From a patriarchal perspective,

[76] From an American standpoint, the Appalachian Mountains never betokened, in any way, the ideas of moral refinement or 'Edenic re-beginning' that a pastoral landscape usually recalls, but, as I made clear in my introduction, they were associated with a gamut of negative values. Also, wilderness is not very consistent with the idea of 'middle landscape' that pastoralism suggests.

[77] In his article Mahoney points to Poussin's famous painting *Et in Arcadia ego*, meaning "'I too am in Arcadia', and the I is Death". Interruption comes not only from the machine, for it is also present in the very forces of nature itself. See https://www.princeton.edu/~hos/h398/midland.html.

[78] *Idem.*

and as we see in chapter three, the garden archetypal image remains "an effective metaphor of ownership of both land and labor" (Harrison, *The Female* 3).

In that sense, as stressed previously, the cherished "return to the primal warmth of womb" (Kolodny, *The Lay* 6) could never endure. D. H. Lawrence's axiomatic assertion, that those seeking 'freedom from' become in great measure the least free, corroborates Kolodny's stance. The seeds of a sprouting civilization, combined with a sense of frenzied individual ambition, bellied the gradual exploitation and disturbance of nature, as they cemented the fundamental paradox of the pastoral vision. According to Kolodny, "the symbolic consciousness is the inevitable conflict locked into the heart of American pastoral: that which is contained within the matrix of the feminine, however attractive as 'a beautiful green tree' (…) must inevitably fall helpless victim to masculine activity" (*The Lay* 24). In that sense, the startling realisation that nature has to be transformed into useful resources or wealth spurred the desecration of the pastoral idyll, and not before long the "virginal territories" became something entirely different: "a farm, a village, a road, a canal, a railway, a mine, a factory, a city, and finally, an urban nation" (Kolodny *The Lay* 4).

This gradation is well encapsulated in the novel, where some characters inhabit an interstitial position: they hover between the preservation of a large biotic community, and the encroachment of a homogenizing urban nation. Additionally, from an ecofeminist standpoint, this is significant as the male fantasy unravels irrevocably in the submersed impulses of instrumentalization or domination, a bleak canvas where the exploitation of nature and women is most exacerbated. In fact, Kolodny elucidates how the frontier mustered an immense attraction as it furnished a pre-oedipal possibility, stressing what Turner has celebrated as heroic masculine "dominant individualism" and separation (*The Land* 9). Hence, symbolizing the land as female yielded possibilities for rampant "conquest and mastery" (Kolodny, *The Land* 133) in a larger social environment where, as noted before, femininity was *a priori* diminished. Additionally, in her work *The Death of Nature*, Merchant demonstrates how complacent nature, feminized and passive, conceived of after the traditionally Aristotelian principle of static matter, is associated to a form of "inert corporeality" that legitimizes (masculine) principles of motion and action (10).

Thus, the ultra-feminization of the terrain simultaneously satisfied a particularly masculine experience of the New World, the desire for rekindling a long-lost pastoral Golden Age, and, as D. H. Lawrence contended, the attainment of eternal youth: "a gradual sloughing off of the

old skin" (58), or evasion of the self. If we turn our attention to the novel at hand, we come indeed, as we shortly see, across a "twentieth century Natty Bumppo" (Eckly, *Harriette Arnow* 69), or the remnants of a mythical Daniel Boone. Nunn Ballew, the narrative's main protagonist, may be read as an incarnation of what roughly two centuries earlier, Hector St. John Crevecoeur described as "the farmer turned hunter" (70). Though not penned out in a romantically heroic fashion, Nunn nevertheless protests against disquieting forces that ultimately stem, as we see in chapter three, not from the land itself, but from inherited identity and personal anxiety. In an Appalachian context, Barbara Kingsolver has eloquently explored this inherited 'identity trope' as "a dread built into humans via centuries of fairy tales: give man the run of a place and he will clear it of wolves and bears" (31). As I explore further in chapter three, the very act of cleansing or purging the landscape of menacing predators, greatly mars Nunn's interrelationship with this most feared and abhorred territoriality—the wild. This is not to say, however, that the character cannot, at times, also recognize its intricate and abundant beauty, or that he does not enjoy an attuned embeddedness in nature. Yet, a sort of spatial 'boundary fluidity' is visibly more attributed to female, rather than male characters.

In that sense, as critics have repeatedly observed, *Hunter's Horn* is essentially a story of women, and significant for their individual construal of reality and the land (Ballard; Walsh). This potential disruption of alternative frontier myths raises some questions. Most conspicuously, did women mythicize contact with the frontier while staging a strong psychosexual and gendered subtext? That is, did gender anxiety or fantasy play any role in the female mode of place construal? If not, how did women come to terms with the immensity of the American wilderness, and how does that process of mythmaking reverberate in the lives of Arnow's female characters, even in the first half of the twentieth century? Additionally, though not feminizing nature, women's gender roles and performativity shifted, at least in the imaginary, as the circumstances of settlement and conditions of nature often required a reassessment of physical and mental strength. As Kolodny and Arnow both illuminate, women's own vocabulary and their means of becoming acquainted with place, rather than clinging to heroic independence or conquest, retreat to a form of domesticity that proposes an alternative affinity with nature, one clad in authenticity, care, sustenance, and open receptivity.

In *The Land Before Her* (1984), Kolodny pieces together the other facet of the frontier's imaginary and unearths the vocabulary of women's experience of and exchanges with wilderness. This particular narrative traces not only women's ways of processing fundamental disruption and change manifested in early literature—how to acquaint and interact with sudden

geographical otherness, for instance—but it gathers, likewise, a variety of conditions that shaped a form of 'female frontier identity', which, while revolving around the ideal of domesticity further disseminated through relationships of deeper kinship between human and nonhuman others. In an environment publicly conceived as luxuriantly female yet heedlessly exploited, women eased their confrontation with the wild through "the language of gardening" (*The Land* 7), while at times openly admonishing escalating male destruction. As Baym concurs, women were "less likely (…) to cast themselves as virgin land" (75).

Gardening, as Clapp maintains, quickly morphs into physical labour: women were indeed partly involved in the process "of clearing land, planting crops and constructing a cabin" (22). Therefore, as Kolodny avers, even though there may have been instincts of domestication, transformation, or tampering at play, they did generally not respond to a hierarchical, or exploitative motivation.[79] Instead, in the Appalachian context, Ester Goblier maintains that women learned to worship the rugged and elemental mountains, for they "represent a sense of protection, and are associated with a desire to stay close to the *mountains that create their home*" (349, my italics), evincing the key role physical landscape plays in these women's understandings of and relationships between 'self' and 'home'.

Moreover, exploring a number of nineteenth century literary works by female authors, Kolodny concludes that women not only declined to share the overriding male imagination of the land as female, but simultaneously saw it as encumbering their own form of Eden, germinating a desire to make in wilderness a home (*The Land* 8), rather than destructively making a home out of wilderness. Furthermore, the domestic place and its enfolding land, an extension of this conceptual garden, becomes an interstitial space, a mediator between the self an alien wilderness. From an ecofeminist perspective, this transitory space, what I called in chapter one as an "epistemically rich" territory (Cuomo, *Ecological Communities* 58), invites a form of identity that is relational, and which enables a human-nature dynamic that is continuous, and reciprocal (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*; Gaard, "Interconnections"). This female space, while socially and economically devalued, is represented as one of potential fertility, anathema to patriarchal aggression and 'pastoral manipulation'. What ensues is a "complex integration of home and community [and nature] made possible by that fertility" (Kolodny, *The Land* 12). In this vein, the reading that I propose for Arnow's *Hunter's Horn* is one where the female

[79] I am reminded of Elinore Stuart's *Letters of a Woman Homesteader*: occasional anxiety or fear of the unknown landscape can be positively channelled through growing and gardening. Though gardening may be considered a way of changing and 'humanizing' the landscape, it does not cohere, however, with the opposite masculine inclination, that of overmastering and conquering the landscape.

domestic and "garden language" (Kolodny, *The Land*), instead of merely indicating a stance of ongoing survival and adaptation, responds, rather, to a witting form of sublimation or creative power on part of the character that is otherwise socially quelled: a constant (re)generation of myth.[80] When I henceforth refer to the concept of 'garden', I bear in mind Kolodny's specific conception.

Therefore, I argue that domesticity, despite having grown from a patriarchal oppressive division of labour or female backgrounding, an issue that I will explore in greater detail in chapter three, plays an invaluable role in holding the community concisely together and in cultivating healthy affinity with other possible bio-communities—the blooming of a local "impulse to protect nature" (Miller 5). On the other hand, domestic work is also performed partly as a way of interacting with the land, the outdoors, or animals, the conventionally male playfield. I am reminded of Elinore Steward, who envisages life on the frontier and homesteading as an antidote to the growing patriarchal restrictions women endure in urban centres. In Arnow's work, the female frontier's narrative is continuously re-lived and imagined, and one may argue, from an ecofeminist perspective, that female characters proudly brandish certain regenerative characteristics for self-invigorating purposes. Thus, native Appalachian writers, among whom Harriette Arnow, understand that "focusing on family relationships and the inner lives of women emphasizes the qualities in the lives of Appalachian women that make them admirable" (Miller 2), rather than stereotypically redundant.

Ultimately, while it may be true that the performance of these "virtues" may strengthen women's subjugation in a framework still governed by patriarchal power, they nevertheless also prove essential for these fictional women's achievement of a more fully embedded and attuned self. These anxieties were well expressed by 19th century female writers, who vindicated the home and garden space as female identity-making sites, while equally acquiescing to its constricting dangers and impediments. As Margaret Fuller insightfully affirmed in her *Summer on the Lakes* (1843), most women on the frontier "found their labour disproportioned to their strength, if not their patience (…) they found themselves confined to a comfortless and laborious indoor life" (117)—nature or wildness remaining but a coveted arena

[80] As I argue below this exercise of seeking liberation or sublimation through a 'language' or vocabulary that is conventionally reduced—domesticity, for instance—may subvert the very idea of oppression. I was introduced to this idea by different contemporary authors: Claire Louise Bennett's *Pond* (2015), Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* (2015), or Marilynn Robinson's *Housekeeping*, have encouraged me to theorize the domestic purview also as a territory of meaningful expression and germination. Susan Fraiman envisions the regenerative exercise of "self-expression [to be found]in the domestic sphere" (129).

controlled by men. Thus, when Richard Slotkin envisions the American frontier to be a soothing balm for the distressed soul (quoted in Kolodny, *The Land* 47), or, similarly, when Marx sees the pastoral as "a simpler, more satisfying mode of life in a realm 'closer' (…) to nature" (*The Machine* 54), these forms of expansive adventure not only did often not exist for women, they determined, as I explained above, a masculine identity that potentially operated according to hierarchical 'power-over relations'. A female Arcadian ideology, to which the title of this chapter refers, attempts to go beyond the exercise of curtailing power; it is an attuned and intersubjective performance which, as Harrison envisions, allows for the female protagonist(s) "to derive strength and fulfil passion" (*Female* 13). About to delve into *Hunter's Horn*'s narrative analysis, I want to stress Ursula K. Le Guin's soothing words. I am essentially looking for "the nature, subject, words of the other story, the untold one, the life story" ("The Carrier" 152), countering the much-hackneyed tales of destruction and death. Thus, instead of only the "Story of the Ascent of Man the Hero" (Le Guin, "The Carrier" 151), Arnow also collects the beads of knowledge that rural Appalachian farmers can still share with us today: a votive light to life.

***Hunter's Horn*: In Quest of "The Life Story"**

Harriette Arnow's second published work, *Hunter's Horn* (1949), relates the story of the Ballew family, inhabitants of a remote and fictitious mountain community, Little Smokey Creek, spanning the years before and during the Second World War. Whereas Arnow originally imagined her work under the tittle *End of the Gravel*, which re-uses the symbolism of paths implied in her first novel, *Mountain Path* (1936), it was strategically precluded by editorial advice. Upon publication, many angered readers, misled by the expectations of an adventurous hunter's tale, in the fashion of Hemingway's *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, or even Melville's *Moby Dick*, missed the crux of her work altogether. Kathleen Walsh regards the novel as an outstanding and subversive re-imagination of the American hunter's tale, recreated by the vocabulary of female "interdependence" (153). Similarly, the male protagonist's 'pursued object', a "bewitched fox" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 44), does not earn Moby Dick's descriptive dimensions, and as a symbol the fox remains, as we see in the conclusion to this piece, developed for purposes other than a 'captain Ahab-like' feverish masculine outrage.

Indeed, in the introduction to her 1963 edition of *Mountain Path*, Arnow tackles the deception of her reading public: "they had envisioned from the title red coats and high life with a saddle leather smell only to find the central family with one old mare and not one good saddle" (xiv), whereas, in fact, intricate family and eco-social relationality is really what becomes

foregrounded in the narrative. Again, the period from which Arnow is writing, the closing years of the 1920s, and the beginning of the 1930s, marks what H. R. Stoneback considers "a hitherto unacknowledged awakening" (Miller 79) in Appalachian literature: native Appalachian authors' politically-minded endeavour to write about their people and their landscape as they really are. Miller further expounds that "in the novels and stories of these writers, best exemplified by Jesse Stuart, James Still, and Harriette Arnow, mountain women are portrayed as strong, proud, full of life, and indomitable spirit" (2), signalling a distinct crossroads parting with the local colour writers' often unrealistically polarized representations.[81]

More than anything, *Hunter's Horn* encompasses a patched tapestry of characters and their psychological mindscapes: Nunn Ballew, whom Cratis Williams would consider the epitomic "lord of the household" (quoted in Miller 26); Milly, whom in fact, as Miller posits, silently sustains the domestic "industry" and community (3); their children, with special relevance given to the maturing Suse; and their domestic animals, who though at times instrumentalized, are, as we see in greater detail in the following chapter, generally envisaged as part of the family. The family members' individual interests and limitations are artfully spun into a web of power relationships that are best put at play against or amid nature's own unravelling course. Indeed, the author captures such relationships among humans themselves or between humans and nature, evincing what ecofeminists would theorize as different yet interrelated power relations (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 46); some, as we will see, unjustifiably hegemonic while others simply required for human flourishing.

While the narrative appears initially built around the compulsive pursuit of King Devil, an elusive and extremely cunning red fox who, in the likes of Melville's "Moby Dick" or Faulkner's "The Bear", quickly earns mythic proportions, the male protagonist often abandons his family to a state of relentless dearth and loss, in order to augment his chances at catching the animal. Yet, his motives, fears, and mental anxieties are clearly laid out, and his self-awareness and overall character complexity prevent a precipitous form of judgement or essentialist vilification on part of the reader. As I explore in my next chapter, Nunn becomes dehumanized in his pursuit, and ultimately, a victim to his own patriarchal motivations or inheritance. In addition, the heroic effects of the hunting scenes instead of reaching their much-awaited apex become somewhat de-centralized, for, as Sandra Ballard maintains, "women's

[81] After a tidal wave of romantic representations of mountain women, some authors turned to exaggerated pessimism, portraying 'Appalachian reality' as doomed and defeated. Arnow's *Mountain Path* (1963), while often regarded as her sole work of local colour, furnishes indeed an overly grim image of local community and family.

household activities of cooking, gardening, preserving, nursing, and tending children and livestock" (146) are rendered with equally extraordinary detail, and become, in the end, a gendered counterpoint to the novel's male character's 'enterprise'. Arnow's narrative diversity of voices, the balancing interplay of perspectives, and the diegetic manifestation of independent nonhuman life, debouch into a pondered "treatment of timeless issues" (Ballard 141).

However, as Ballard further maintains, critics who have hailed the novel as a brilliantly orchestrated "pastoral of the Kentucky Hills" (141) committed Arnow's work to canonical oblivion, tagging it as regionalism, a work of excellence yet "of its kind" (idem), and thus not worthy of trans-local study and appraisal. Conversely, Kathleen Walsh insightfully contends that *Hunter's Horn* "has merits beyond its regional feature, since it presents a subtle examination of the code of individuality which pervades American life and literature" (4), as it encases an expansive 'refabrication' of one of the United States' cornerstone myths. As I mentioned, Arnow's novel clearly demonstrates how narratives situated in a specific regional locale offer a wellspring of great interest and value to the pragmatic fields of ecocriticism, bioregionalism, and ecofeminism. It indeed displays the ways in which human beings' distinctly ambivalent relationships towards place mirror a larger, more global conception or imagination. Roughly a decade later, in her *The Dollmaker*, Arnow recreates this same gendered amplitude, its crevices and discrepancies yet in a politically much larger context, the industrialist Detroit landscape. Hence, purposefully considering the novel's female characters, I proceed to illustrate how Kathleen Walsh's vision of "interdependence" (155), an expression of love and care both towards the land and the community, engenders a continual re-experience of the unsung pioneer woman's most praiseworthy deed: crafting wilderness into familiar land which could, in the words of Eugene Walter, become "seen, heard, smelled, imagined, loved, hated, feared, revered" (quoted in Buell, "Space, Place" 63), or simply felt as a home.

The reader is first acquainted with Milly Ballew, the female protagonist, as she patiently fondles her new-born chicks, unable to withstand the early signs of a mountain September frost. Her physical description contrasts strongly with her burgeoning energy, her at times blind idealism, or the relentless bouts of strength she readily gifts to others. Indeed, she is portrayed as possessing a "thin child's body in a ragged faded dress and feed-sack apron" while displaying soil-encrusted and "bare brown feet" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 5).[82] On the other hand, the

[82] Curiously, the author does not follow the stereotypical image of broad, sturdy, and strong-bodied mountain women. Chambers mentions that women physically "embodied the strength and security of the mountains that surrounded them" (22). Wilma Dykeman's *The Tall Woman* (1982) is a testament to this strategy of representation.

reader is made aware that Milly, while native to the Southern Appalachian Mountains, spent the years of her childhood and adolescence straying from place to place, before settling on her husband Nunn's inherited land. She is thus not from Little Smoky Creek, and the profuse respect she emotes towards the local interspersing communities is part of her own 'progressive narrative' of place-making. Furthermore, one of the most steadfast characteristics that defines characters such as Milly, Nunn, their daughter Suse, or Sue Annie, the local healer and midwife, is their strong sense of place, and their minute awareness of the plurality of nonhuman life that, in an environment of dangerous contingency, remains likewise craning for individual flourishing. In fact, Miller envisages most Southern Appalachian women in literary fiction as establishing a close "affinity with nature and the cyclic patterns of life" (3). This is not to say women find in nature a spiritual gateway—given the fact that religion vehemently prohibits straying spiritual affinities,[83] their bond is instead organic and corporeal, as the landscape assumes the daunting dimensions of something pervasively real, the manifestation of a physical "larger whole" which, as Joana Macy believes, empowers human beings towards the achievement of the "ecological self" (46). It is fair to assume, thus, that a sense of, or quest for female embodiment, defined and discredited in the culturally pervasive religious discourse, is searched after in the larger 'body' of the earth.

Accordingly, place or "individual emplacement" become complex and multi-faceted concepts for these fictional women: the land and their individual dwellings become imbued, as I hinted, with the trope of the (primitive) 'garden'—a narrative of place-making and interdependence—while nature is also oftentimes inflected by individual and collective semiotic or genealogical projections. Indeed, in her introduction to *Seedtime on the Cumberland*, Arnow acknowledges that there was one pervasive element "that tied all time together"—the land (xii).

On the other hand, the landscape, inasmuch as its nonhuman occupants, animals or plants, become a source of inestimable companionship, and offers a possibility of 'transcendence' from women's social restraints and at times over-towering burdens of expectation. Returning to Milly, it is interesting to note how she operates in what seems at first an ambient of unhindered pastoral bliss, shared by a network of beings, each harmoniously following the ken of their individual place. This human-nature unity, much orbiting around the 'domestic sanctuary'—yet not exclusive to it—becomes at once perceptible when the Ballew family

[83] The oppressive character of "mountain religion(s)", is explored in the following chapter. I will argue that, remaining strictly linked to patriarchal interests and privilege, the fundamentalist Calvinism represented in Arnow's work curtails both women's embodied experiences and animals' individuation. What is more, Milly is often led to feel guilty for engaging in kinship bonds with beings other than humans.

shares their water with their domestic animals and livestock: "the cow crossed the road and stopped to drink from a moss-grown hollowed-out log set under a trickle of spring water" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 4). This constitutes what Warren identifies as a "locus of value" (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 103), a shared *nucleus* that satiates intersubjective and "biological needs" (Tuan 4). Indeed, this excerpt may seem to convey but a trivial morsel of information, yet it is quite telling of an obfuscation of human-nonhuman boundaries, a core principle of ecofeminist philosophy and a defining characteristic of Kolodny's vision of 'female place-sharing'.

Additionally, from a narrative standpoint, as ecofeminist authors Gaard ("Strategies"), Murphy ("Ground"), or Donovan ("Criticism") argue, this blurring of conceptual dualisms offers nonhuman nature a more integral and respectful subject-hood or agency. These often othered textual entities are not simply backgrounded by what Virginia Woolf contends as the overshadowing ego of the anthropocentric, possibly androcentric "I subject" (98). Indeed, *Hunter's Horn* displays a gamut of nonhuman others enlivened with remarkable individuality, be it Zing, a hound who establishes emotive and corporeal conversations with Milly, the grunts and "moaning cry of unhappy cattle" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 79), conscious of the impending butcher's knife, or Betsey, Milly's cow, empathically sharing and partaking in Milly's painful and lonesome episode of childbearing (236). In that sense, as much as the novel forwards a story of rural women and men, it equally attempts to voice the realities of the animals with remarkable integrity, an issue I will pursue in greater detail in the following chapter. For now, this consciousness of plurality and the profuse manifestation of physical landscape, lead Milly to develop what I have explored in chapter one as an ethic of care, extended, in 'Leopoldian terms', to the soil and its swarming multitude of organisms.

In truth, according to Plumwood, "relationships of care for particular places and earth others form part of one's identity, and these relationships will then be treated as the ground of action and choice, rather than treating these others as interchangeable commodities which can be chosen or abandoned at will" (*Feminism* 155). While Nunn's character also certainly exhibits traces of a care-oriented ethic, this form of identity is at times counterbalanced by his growing tactlessness with the land, his livestock, and his family, as his pursuit of King Devil seems to solidify the patriarchal state of detachment or separation that ecofeminists underline. Following in the footsteps of a rich Appalachian literary tradition, *Hunter's Horn* can, in fact, be regarded as a long elegiac letter to an actual physical place, a bioregion, as Prajznerová observes, encompassing an intricate web of ecosystems, natural conditions, and human practices/beliefs, on the brink of dissolution. Whereas Arnow's work gains a political and gendered flavour, the

writing of place has long found roots in the Appalachian literary experience: a cultivation of an ecology of mind. In the words of Ian Marshal:

> The Appalachians are the only American mountain chain for which we have written accounts of encounters with the land from the earliest days of European settlement to the present. As a result, in the body of literature set in the Appalachians, one can trace our evolving legacy of landscape aesthetics, and our changing attitudes towards nature and the wild (3).

In that sense, the place that Milly claims her own, or better, claims as an appendage of the "self", is wedged in between mountainous ridges and summits, a relic of primordial wilderness. It embodies not only her most treasured 'companions' rather than possession, but it equally signals a geographical mapping or embodiment of her own sense of self and past. Indeed, as Prajzneroá claims, saving the land from irreversible depletion becomes one of Milly's main narrative purposes (104), and contributes, in the end, both to her own fulfilment, and to the memory of those who worked the land before her. In addition, Arnow's meticulous place-sensitivity and imagination is not, in contrast with the local colour movement, designed as a romantic or idyllic backdrop. It is a textual area which, apart from being infused with its own vital strength, invites possibilities of mostly female intersection and intersubjectivity. Not writing the land *as* female, the landscape becomes, as Harrison expounds, almost as if an overarching character aiding rural southern women in the achievement of significant corporeal transgression (*The Female Pastoral* 13).

Indeed, being well anchored to place does enhance a form of self-knowledge, inasmuch as it emphasizes the existence and significance of possible larger communities. Accordingly, Lawrence Buell observes that "the sense of being environed or emplaced begins to yield to a more self-consciously dialectical relation between being and habitat" ("Space, Place" 62), and certainly with the plethora of organisms scattered across what is considered "our habitat" as well (Prajznerová 103). On the same note, Plumwood maintains that "an important ground of certain caring relations would be a locally particularised identity involving commitment to a particular place and its non-human as well as its human inhabitants" (*Feminism* 186), espousing what Buell and a number of ecofeminist philosophers have called a sensitive form of "earth

care" ("Space, Place" 75), a life-ethos which grounds the individual in perfect synchrony with her or his local biotic reality.[84]

Additionally, this sense of localness is further prefaced in the novel, as Arnow includes a meticulously drawn map of the fictitious village and its surroundings. The importance of represented cartography speaks, as Paul Matthews has stressed, of the point where environmental or physical 'outwardness' meet with the character, as well as reader's "inwardness", imagination or possibly memory (10).[85] To a certain extent, conceptualizing place as an appendage of the self, or as some authors have put it, accepting the relationship between body and earth, allows Arnow to position her characters in a mythic narrative that remains in part embowered by the landscape, and projects, from a female standpoint, what Kolodny has begun to conceptualize as the defining traits of the 'American Eve'. Miller indeed envisages the Appalachian woman-nature relationship to be one of "almost mythic" (3) proportions, a form of 'embalmed identity' that is continuously reshaped and imagined tying "nature and culture together" (Sack quoted in Buell, "Space, Place" 66).

In *Hunter's Horn*'s opening chapters, the author stitches the concepts of culture and nature together, embedding her characters in their natural habitat. The reader can immediately perceive how much the land seeps through the characters' consciousness and identities, for Arnow skilfully writes the woman-land narrative as un-eroticized, a strategy that can be read as proto-ecofeminist: "how women are naturalized [to the mountains] is what the feminist perspective of Appalachian literature is all about" (Ganim 259). For characters such as Milly, the valleys and mountains that embosom their community assume the dimensions of their known world and reality. D.H. Lawrence's words come to mind and seem appropriate here: "the spirit of place is a great reality" (12), if not the physical delimitations of this character's reality itself. Milly's identity and sense of belonging are attuned to the "valley where hills open more wildly" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 11) and its daily miracles: the "slowly rising river fog" (idem), the impeccable stillness, or in turn, the melodious symphonies of the whippoorwills, wood thrushes, wrens or other birds endemic to the region. On the other hand, as Joan Griffin contends, time is measured from the imprint it leaves on physical place, from the seasonal

[84] Snyder argues that one's nativity does not guarantee one's sense of emplacement. One needs to be actively involved with place itself, offering it our time, energy, and nourishment (27). On the same note, as Marcel Hunziker, Matthias Buchecker, and Terry Hartig contend, "as the amount of time spent in a place increases, the relationship to the place, and in particular the attachment, intensifies and becomes deeper (from 'aesthetic experience' to 'part of place') as well as more comprehensive (from special place to area-wide)" (52).

[85] I am recalled of Faulkner's 'cartography' of his imaginary Yoknapatawpha county. In Arnow's work, as is the case with Faulkner's, pictorial maps aid the reader's cohesive engagement with the singleness of one place.

change to the movement of the sun and stars (40) guiding characters as much as reader throughout the narrative. Passing time is measured through "barely perceptible shiftings, migrations, moods, and machinations of its creatures, its growing green things, its earth and sky" (Duncan quoted in Davis 11), and 'nature's clock', alongside scarce references to "the war across the waters" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 132) serve as main temporal compass for the narrative pace.[86]

Sitting on her porch and facing the sprawling "sunflooded valley" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 13), Milly becomes part of a rich mosaic of sound and colour, where reality and imagination artfully merge: "the accustomed sounds of her world slipped into the back of her mind, where they made a little pattern, a pattern she noticed only when some part was changed around or missing" (14). A deluge of sounds, buzzing, twittering, fluttering, and clanking of bells dreamily relocates Milly from the constrictive space of the home to the richness of nature that folds around it. As Engelhardt observes, in small and usually remote mountain communities, women's consciousness may merge with their places ("Placing their Feminism" 16), and while not forfeiting their distinctiveness, this points to an image of totality or symbiosis. What is more, as McFague's would have it, Milly's bodily experience is complemented by the awareness of other bodies and forms of embodiments (quoted by Kronlid 137), mostly nonhuman, that circle in her vicinity. In that sense, the character's eco-communion seems to be mediated through an imprinted vocabulary of domesticity, the on-living impulse of furnishing familiarity and homeliness.

In addition, Milly's minute knowledge of place becomes first apparent to the reader as she unfalteringly traces the narrative's first related fox hunt, retreating to a 'bioregional map' carefully puzzled together in her mind's eye, what Matthews calls a form of "hearstcape" (10).[87] Interestingly, the first hunting passage is described from Milly's absent yet imagined or visualized point of view, narrating the exclusively masculine and highly public event from the female and private domestic arena: an aspect which not only begins to re-define the meaning of domesticity—through its continuity with the outdoors—but one which also disarms the

[86] This mode of experiencing time corresponds to what Merchant *(Death of)* or Susan Griffin envision as cyclical or 'organic time'. That is another reason why, perhaps, the dimension of past is quintessential to Appalachian communities. The ways and knowledge of the past are a significant component of the cyclical understanding of the present. Indeed, the region's introduction to a homogenizing cultural system, as well as to a capitalistic economic mode of exchange, may threaten this vision.

[87] According to Snyder, being thoroughly emplaced also means re-creating and inhabiting place as "inscribed in the mind" (28). In fact, the mental and affective recreation of pathways, groves, riverbeds or other elements of a given spatiality are crucial for an ethically sounder interrelationship with that specific place.

conventional hunting tale. Arnow's choice is meaningful not only in that it juxtaposes—or even supplants—the heroic trope of the male American hunter (Kolodny, *The Lay*) with the emblem of the female 'domestic heroine' (Drewitz-Crockett), it also further bestows Milly with the possibility of letting her mind run free, yearn for movement—even if just in imagination—along the pathways, forests, and creeks she knows so astoundingly well. However, this short-lived sense of excitement is paired with a harrowing sense of concern for Zing, the family's hunting hound which, while esteemed and pampered by Milly and the children, will ultimately be run to death in a forthcoming chase. As we see further in chapter three, the character's concern for Zing completely annuls the typical Cartesian human-animal dualism (Plumwood, *Feminism* 45): instances abound where Milly's inasmuch as her children's treatment of the dog likens that of the attention given to a beloved child.

Moreover, subversively channelling her domestic chores as a form of release, or passageway into the sphere of the outdoors, performing "a job that would give her *an excuse* to sit outside and listen" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 29, my italics), Milly remains seated under a walnut tree, working and listening, by the shimmer of the moon. Through the character's ensuing alertness, the reader is invited into the space of her thoughts and imagination: "she understood that King Devil ran, or maybe she only imagined it—she was too low in the valley for good hearing" (30). What is more, no textual distinction is further made between Milly's act of listening, and the forthcoming relating of the hounds' location and action:

> Milly (…) sat, with lifted dasher listening. The hounds were on the side of the mountain, running high under the cliffs that led up to Pilot Rocks. Then, on the flank of the mountain, back of Lureenie's, where the lowlands of Smokey Creek ended and the long sweep of Pilot Rock Mountain rolled downward to the river bluff, Zing's voice told they were coming down. (idem).

This episode probes Milly to run through her own garden, and "stare out across the moonlight-flooded valley into the black shadowy hills" (31), an exercise of possible self-projection, sprouting the seeds of a female liberty that remains, nevertheless, painfully suffused by greater circumstances.[88] Following that line of thought, the hunt and its aggressive, detached outcome are detracted in light of a particularly female and domestic connection to the land.

[88] In fact, Haeja Chung, one of Arnow's main critics, stresses this as one of her literary fortes: drawing out and emphasizing the many lost possibilities of women in their communities, demonstrating, in a sense, what could have been. See "The Harbinger: Arnow's Short Fiction".

On the other hand, what is striking here, aside from Milly's perspicacious awareness of place, is that, rather than being interested, as Nunn and the community of hunting men, in the hegemonic sophistication of 'power-over relations', in the victorious act of conquering or killing itself,[89] she simply longs for the unboundedness of the chase. Thus, she hungrily imagines the speed, twists and turns of the animals' movement pinned onto a real and familiar place. Furthermore, as suggested above, knowledge of place morphs into a form of "valuation of place" (Engelhardt, "Placing their Feminism" 16), and engenders what Tuan considers "centers of felt value" (4). These *loci* of value not only motivate an intersubjective dialogue with others, they also become perceived as a "larger order persisting over time of which humans are [or become] a part" (Plumwood, *Feminism* 101), an order that precedes social constructs or precepts. While Milly openly suffers from patriarchal impositions, she visibly turns to the (intemporal) balm of the earth for nurturance. However, it is Suse, her eldest daughter, who extracts from the hunt a form of transcendence from the burdens that are visibly starting to wear her down: "it would be fun to run and run forever, like King Devil, through the windy, silvery night, to be held by nothing, worried by nothing, not even God or the neighbors" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 31). This passage begins to illuminate how nature and its wild forces awaken in Milly, yet more prominently in Suse, a desire that cuts deeper than any patriarchal rule, misogynistic religious dogma, or indeed desire to kill, a line of thought that will prove useful in the conclusion to this piece. In fact, Milly and her children often disapprove of, even if they never openly object to, Nunn's escalating hunting compulsion. Not only is he "gone from home at night" (25), his drive to out-power the animal ultimately enforces his family's state of poverty while augmenting their physical strain. This is significant from an ecofeminist angle, congealing a form of masculinity and femininity, which, while not entirely discontinuous, can coincide with the moral canvases of a mythic American Adam and Eve.

The 'American Adam' and the Hunting Narrative

In truth, in the beginning of the novel, Milly and Nunn appear, in a way, to incarnate their roles of American Adam and Eve (Kolodny, *The Land*; Lewis), each bearer of different conceptions, different "promises and possibilities" (Lewis 1), projected onto the surface of their distinctive gardens. Yet, the opening is one of the very few moments in the novel where the mirage of integrity, unity, and respectful harmony between both characters seems to prevail. At the end of the day, Milly and Nunn take in, as if ritualistically, the richness of the fading light: they

[89] It is important to stress here that Milly would, in fact, have good reasons to want King Devil caught, as he often impairs her 'domestic excellence', by killing her chickens or other livestock.

watch the sunset, "predict the next day's weather" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 11), observe the billowing of the river fog, and listen to the "last of the home-coming chimney swifts" (idem). Eckley does indeed observe the Edenic quality and pastoral sublimity of this passage, in which the multi-layered compositions of colour, texture, and sound are only slightly disrupted by the copperhead snakes hiding in the tall grass (*Harriette Arnow* 67). The real serpent Eckley fails to notice, however, is that both Adam and Eve stand on a threshold of diverging quests, both fulfilling the parameters of a prototypical masculine and female identity which hover between a visibly more separated patriarchal self, feeding on an exploitative impulse, and a relational, dialogical form of 'femininity' which, as intimated above, is articulated through a resilient form of domesticity, and is, thus, contextual.

Hence, in all its initial simplicity, the quivering tension between a discourse of conquest and nurturance is clearly delineated here: Nunn fails to buy Milly's promised twenty pounds of sugar for the wild grape jelly she joyfully anticipated to make. The totality of the money is spent, instead, on dog feed, an attempt at toughening up Zing to catch the demonic fox, at last. Nunn, staring along the gorge of his valley, imaginatively toying with ideas of ownership, capture, and conquest, marks the embodiment of a mythic "American masculinity", a vestige of what Lewis calls the "archetypal man" (5)—his imagined possibilities, ultimately at the root of the novel's tragedy, appear at this point idealistically limitless. These possibilities, however grand, corner him into the solitude and absentness which any state of compulsion normally engenders. Arnow crafts Nunn after the image of what Leslie Fiedler calls the typically American "man on the run" (xxi), reinvented here into the lonesome hunter, often divorced of familial or ecological responsibilities. Before exploring the triangular relationship between female emplacement, domestic pursuit, and strategies of liberation, I want to devote some attention to this hunting compulsion, how it comes about, and how it might be de-constructed from an ecofeminist perspective.

As a great variety of authors have investigated, hunting is linked, primarily, to the full achievement of a publicly heroic and conquering masculinity (Emel; Kheel; Cartmill; Mallory; Kalof and Taylor). Nunn does not wish the animal to be caught, he obsessively wants it to be caught by himself exclusively. In the introduction to her *Masculinity and the Hunt*, Bates elucidates how in a framework where hunting is no longer a mode of subsistence—that is, in an agrarian society—its significance becomes, indeed, purely symbolical, and might be

conceptually attached to an idea of atavism or primordiality.[90] In addition, hunting is an activity which, according to authors such as Hunnicutt or Marie Bye, associates a rural, mountain, masculinity with the expression and perpetuation of violence, aggression, and separatism.

From an overarching American perspective, then, this 'identity quest' is often traced back to a rugged frontier's masculinity, encapsulating what Marti Kheel calls the image of the "hostile hunter" ("Killing Game" 87), the farmer or landowner prone to purge a given spatiality from undesired natural elements. This should not be confounded with sport or leisure hunting, however. Indeed, while fox hunting remains a deeply rooted Appalachian tradition (Eckley, *Harriette Arnow*), Nunn finds no pleasure in it whatsoever: "n-o-o, fox hunting wasn't so much fun" he painfully admits (Arnow, *Hunter's* 3). While the protagonist harks back to this cultural inheritance, to the need of overcoming the forces of the wild—I see King Devil as an incarnation of this at times feared wild spatiality—he also, visibly, takes offense at the dared intrusion of an entity alien, or alienized rather, to the 'middle', or 'humanized landscape'. As Torrance or Snyder both elucidate, we are taught to fear the idea of wild, and the mitigation of such feelings points to one of the most ancient human necessities, the need to slay the 'timeless beast'. In addition, not being able to preserve the harmony of this intermediary space, ironically, Nunn himself ultimately loses the sense of 'balance' that such an intermediary state requires, for he is left, as we see in chapter three, with the social wounds of emasculation.

Following that line of thought, how does a manifestation of mere tradition, local male ritual, or the forms of ascertaining this specific middle territoriality (Marx, *The Machine*), percolate into a condition of personal obsession? Employing Leo Marx's specific pastoral vocabulary, it initiates quite simply with the crossing of conceptual boundaries. Much like in Faulker's "The Bear", the larger-than-life animal is targeted for the bedlam and loss it causes to the ideal of social and individual harmony. A wild animal crossing over the terrain Nunn possessively considers his own, calls his individual power into question. One may indeed not forget that this so-called "middle landscape" accommodates "at least one central figure: the independent, rational, democratic husbandman" (Marx, *The Machine* 122) who has given sweat and toil to the meticulous separation of a blissful yet artificial and much human-oriented territory from an impinging state of unruly nature, chaos. In that sense, Arnow seems to be aware that the

[90] In the American context Crevecoeur is a good example of this: his *Letters From an American Farmer* deplore, the farmers who degenerated into hunters and who lost a form of tact and knowledge with the land. He considers these hunters closer to the idea of 'savagery', closer to the native inhabitants of the American continent (surely a derogative appreciation). Curiously, centuries later, Fiedler describes Crevecoeur's pastoral and agrarian dream as the cultivation of new guilt, resulting, mainly, from the gradual 'extinction' of Native American tribes (xxiv).

Arcadian and ultimate utopian wish to break from urbanism is rigidly counterpointed by the anthropocentric drive of conquering, adapting, and appeasing wilderness. What Nunn does not fathom, however, is that a wild animal causing terror in a relatively 'domesticated' space is 'reciprocated' in much the same way: he himself repeatedly invades King Devil's own 'geography' as to prove his individual prowess. Nunn embodies, in that sense, the seeds of a very much American ideal of "expansionism" (Rogin 266).

My argument centred on the crossing of imagined geographies is partly indebted to Owain Jones' study on human and nonhuman geographies. Jones indeed cautions that "constructions of individual animals depend on a complex overlaying of meanings and interactions" (280). The villainous meaning that King Devil embodies is owed not solely to its repeated and defying intrusions, it equally springs from the complex meaning that is culturally attributed to its endemic geographical space. In that sense, King Devil is once more reminiscent of the mythic and timeless bear of Faulkner's short story, for he is "not even a mortal animal but an anachronism, indomitable and invincible, out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wildlife at which the puny humans swarmed and hacked in a fury of abhorrence and fear" ("Bear" 187).

Moreover, in relation to initiation rites, Bates has argued similarly: cultural transition rites which impinge upon the initiate the need to hunt and slaughter a wild and individual animal, equally play with ideas of transitory movement between spaces holding different cultural value and meaning. In that sense, Nunn interacts with large terrains of cultural, conceptual, and gendered meaning. In Bates' own words, hunting consists of a continuous circular movement from the "'outside' back in again: from the forest back to the plough land, as it were" (2). Although Nunn is not an initiate, he can be characterised using Bates' assertion, namely that "the initiate experiences the wild in all its danger and unpredictability in order to *overcome it* and then to put that proven power to use" (3, my italics). This imposed condition of "overcoming" a certain terrain or state, lies at the root of what has been coined, in contemporary ecocritical theory as the "ecophobia hypothesis", described by Estok as "a generalized fear or contempt for the natural world and its inhabitants", human and nonhuman alike (75).

Hence, in my vision, the onslaught against King Devil might correspond to Leo Marx's theorization on the embossing of a "rural order" (*The Machine* 101) which is neither "wild nor urban" (idem). Curiously, as I argued before, rather than the ominous train, the pastoral 'counterforce' that transverses so many early US literature, it is the wildness of natural

conditions that seems most perverse and disturbing here.[91] Simultaneously, Marx' ideas on the mental "middle state" (*The Machine* 100) seem congenial to my argument and correspond to this design as well. This state of mental mediation hovers indeed between the rational and the animal. In fact, if we strip away the layers of contextual and cultural meaning, all that is left is the ur-clash between two beings: one who sets out as rational, the other deemed non-rational, and the former's attempt of overthrowing the latter. As we see in chapter three, however, narrative-wise, both struggling human and animal characters become dangerously similar to one another, and Nunn may become, in fact, thoroughly 'animalized'.

Furthermore, Cartmill has noted that hunting "takes place at the boundary between the human domain and the wilderness, the hunter stands with one foot on each side of the boundary" (31). The identification with the hunted animal may blot out the distinctive line that runs between the rational and the non-rational, so that not only physically, but mentally as well, hunting projects the subject to a dangerous state of indeterminacy. Nunn's "insane anger" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 258) for instance, grows out of a very human and cultural anxiety, rigid gender standards, and yet its result teeters dangerously into what is derogated as the irrationality or the wildness of 'the beast'. The paroxysm of emotions, nascent from the character's state of compulsion renders him, in his cultural cadre, not so dissimilar from what he is chasing: 'inferior wildness' associated to animality. Indeed, in his pursuit of masculinity, he is adversely and 'tragically' met with emasculation, public stigmatization, and a palpitating sense of dehumanization.

Interestingly, the rustic aspiration, the apparent penchant for nature that is so commonly associated to Appalachian culture operates ambiguously here. Nunn succeeds in 'betraying' the pastoral dream, for the state of wilderness must be altered, shaped by a rational and human design. Ultimately, it is, according to Snyder, not wilderness, but our own human, overly rational beliefs and schemes that create a true sense of disorder and disconnection (100). In addition, borrowing Marx's words, it seems fair to assert here that Nunn surpasses the "point of equilibrium beyond which, further departure from 'nature'" (*The Machine* 115) becomes deeply injurious, not only to nature itself, but mostly to the rural pastoral enterprise. The intrusion of the animal, and Nunn's fierce protestation suggests that, from the outset, there

[91] Whereas in Faulkner's "The Bear" the animal is compared to the speed of a locomotive (186), Arnow, writing in the twentieth century, establishes a parallel between king Devil and the devastation he causes, and a different kind of 'counterforce'—the Second World War. Indeed, "brief thoughts of the war across the waters stirred in Nunn as he and the pups walked over the hill together through the bright rustling leaves" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 222). Tying the particular to the universal, the character seems to wage his own war, and roam on his own battlefield.

seems to be an unsurmountable paradox pertaining to the "reconciliation between the animal and rational, natural and civilized (…) implied by the pastoral" dream (Marx, *The Machine* 102). This relates, I argue, also to the very ways in which our gendered behaviour and relationships with human and nonhuman others are construed or disputed by hierarchy and power-over conceptions. One among many ideas which the works of Marx (*The Machine*), Buell (*Environmental*), Merchant (*Death of*) or Kolodny (*The Lay*; *The Land*) all agree on is that a coveted state of harmony and balance, especially in a social framework where the gender prism holds such imperative and punitive meaning, is plagued by an undertow of patriarchal individual ownership and self-assertion, eventually becoming the core source of its (state of harmony) obstruction and unattainability.

The 'American Eve' and Domestic Sublimation

Milly relives the mythic frontier's narrative through the dimension of the "domestic sanctuary" and its surrounding garden (Kolodny, *The Land* xiii) in a visibly intersubjective and relational way: the steppingstones to what I call in my title as the 'female Arcadian ecology'. While it remains locked deeply within *Hunter's Horn*'s narrative, the realm of the household proves essential to Milly, for reasons I will draw out in this section. In fact, Arnow insightfully envisions the bitter ambivalence of Appalachian women's circumstances and positions (Miller 15). Often dominated, exploited, or downright maltreated, women like Milly or Suse are in fact "the sustainers of life" (Farr, "Appalachian Women" 11), not solely in its most literal and biological sense, but also because the performance of domestic and farm work 'heroically' upholds the workings of their family and larger community. The domestic arena can thus be counted among the "epistemically rich" territories Cuomo underlines: they signal "subject locations, that are epistemically rich, though they are seldom acknowledged as being rich in knowledge by those with political and economic power" (*Ecological Communities* 58). Sue Annie, the witty and outspoken midwife, grasps the paradox of the Appalachian woman as no other when she affirms: "child, the world cain't git along without door-sills to walk on; that's why the good God made women" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 417). Similarly, in *Mountain Path*, the main female characters silently acknowledge that "women have th' hardest work uv all" (342), since the cultural concept of femininity remains forcefully constricted to a number of oppressive mechanisms and expectations, as further explored in chapter three. Yet, as I have mentioned above, Arnow's female characters' valuation of place is so unmistakably part of their own sense of self that they assume a mediating position between different communities and beings, with domesticity playing a significant role in this flux.

Milly, for one, seems utterly conscious of this role, as she thoroughly understands the individual necessities and requests of people, the land, and animals—domestic or wild—that happen to cross her path. When Nunn plans on selling Lizzie, Milly's heifer cow, she is visibly affected and beseeches her husband: "I'll do without anything, everything, if'n you can jist keep Lizzie till her calf comes. We'll need the milk so this spring, an anyhow I hate to see her killed fer beef" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 74), an altruistic valuation of life that may intercede with her own meagre possibilities. Additionally, Milly performs a keen negotiation of individual needs, and her mind assumes a collective concern as she unfalteringly operates in the best interest of her entire family. Indeed, her domestic sensitivity signals the need for milk in the upcoming spring season, while she equally does not forsake or overlook the well-being of her pregnant heifer cow. This, as Warren contends, lies at the heart of a biocentric, rather than anthropocentric worldview (*Ecofeminist Philosophy* 80), a form of wisdom that bestows independence and moral agency to every living being, even if it lives in the sphere of one's own home or land (domestic animals). On a personal level, this type of interaction espouses relationships of kinship, also beneficial to Milly herself. In the end, when confronted with the dire reality of the loss of her cow, the awareness of her (female) performative ethics, as well as her overall intermediary role, blooms fully, as she affirms: "try to find a man that wants a good milk cow (…) she ain't been used to *menfolks*" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 78, my italics).

This leads me to the proposition that in the novel female knowledge of place and eco-communion are mostly experienced through the domestic dimension and its associated moral system. Indeed, ecofeminist Chaia Heller underlines the etymological roots of the word 'ecology' as originally meaning "the way of the house" (234), a practice of a home-based conservation which, as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* so well illuminates, spreads outwards, encompassing a multiplicity of beings living well beyond one's own limiting fences.[92] Moreover, as is well represented in Robinson's *Housekeeping*, the virtue of domestic ritual, and specifically so in rural geographies, centres not only around the much Appalachian value of simplicity, but it opens ways for connectedness as well. Whereas Patrick Murphy regards all literary work broaching the human-nature connection prior to 1970 as "protoecological" ("Ground" 155), failing to celebrate these forms of relationships as "self-conscious ecological

[92] *Silent Spring* (1962) demonstrates how women working at home cultivated interests and concerns that ultimately proved beneficial to animals' lives, in the wake of DDT pesticide use. Since women were often struck by the disappearance of certain animals from their farms or gardens, beings which, in a way partook of their domestic experience, Carson eloquently illustrates how some American 'housewives' or housekeepers were among the early and unsung ecological activists.

writing" (idem), I agree with Vakoch's vision of "Arcadian ecologists" (8). This concept better captures the acute awareness of women like Milly or Sue Annie who "emphasize an empathic understanding of the natural world" (idem), rather than exerting a scientific or rationally superior approach. I thus place this concept at the heart of this chapter, suggesting a form of 'ecology' that is first and foremost practiced compassionately and domestically. Indeed, Elaine Showalter's visionary "American Eve" may sound appealing, as one who "refuse[s] to be domesticated" (474) and who gives herself over entirely to wilderness, yet the concept does not wholly correspond to the place women held in the American literary imagination,[93] and certainly not to the social reality of Appalachian communities (Farr, "Appalachian Women" 11).

In fact, in the novel, and apart, as we see below, from Milly's sporadic 'adventures', it is Suse who finds most significance and potential in a spatiality that is least humanized, or least contaminated by social expectations/precepts. From the opening pages of the novel, and without losing her affective bond with the sphere of 'more-than-human life' around her, Suse deliberately seeks for forms of 'cultural evasion' and emancipation. The enthusiasm and personal ambition the arrival of a new and female teacher awakens in her is apparent when mesmerized, "a little sigh escaped her [Suse], not entirely of envy, but more for all the things gathered in the teacher, things mysterious and unattainable" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 198).[94] When towards the end of the narrative, the promised horizon of education, or the imagined possibilities of city-life slowly dissipate, Suse visibly reaches for 'things mysterious' in a landscape that, though socially feared and compromised, offers her the most valuable of lessons: those of individual freedom, movement and impermanence.

Indeed, one afternoon, enjoying a sense of solitude and anonymity on the Pilot Rock Mountain, Suse becomes enthralled by a flock of approaching geese. Mistaking them at first for an airplane, she seems relieved at the "high wild honking", instilling in her "a wildness that always made a tingling in her hair and a coldness in her hands"—a fountain of sensual and bodily

[93] In commentary of Marilynne Robinson's 'feminist cult novel' *Housekeeping* (1980), Showalter argues that literary works that tackle female characters having unmediated relationships with the wild, do not emerge until the second half of 20th century. Apart from captivity fiction, Unca Winkfield's 'Robinosade' work *The Female American* (1767) contains a good example of a female character and her adventures in 'the wild', after capsizing on an abandoned island.

[94] Interestingly, the new teacher fails to adapt to 'mountain life and education' entirely, being literally chased out of the community by hunting hounds. Apart from arithmetic, geography, and grammar, education goes, in *Hunter's Horn* as well as in her previous novel, *Mountain Path*, very much hand in hand with nature and its own rhythms. Whereas the classroom harmoniously accommodates a variety of nonhuman life, students may also learn about certain plants or growing techniques, being often excused from class to put them to practice with their families.

pleasure (Arnow, *Hunter's* 293). This exhilaration of being a part of wilderness encapsulates the freedom and feminist potential expressed in the act of self-identifying with a 'natural' other in a non-hierarchical, non-dualist and corporeal manner (Murphy, "Ground" 158). The secret emulation Suse harbours for King Devil or other wild animals resides also in her wishful identification with their expression of liberty—their capacity of unbounded movement and renewal.[95] It is with a confiding "smile at the [aiding] hill" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 228) that the character finds hope for a more promising future. I purposefully leave a deeper analysis of this particular scene for the conclusive arguments of my piece, for this union between 'female-self' and wilderness as a strategy for 'personal becoming', may contain the narrative's key moment of female desire for transgression or liberation, and, I argue, can equally begin to include or relocate the 'American Eve' to a territoriality of disorderly nature and 'wildness'.

To come back to my point, recognizing the centrality of the domestic sphere, as well as underlining its dynamic with the sphere of the outdoors, seems crucial in the composition of a rural and Appalachian ecofeminism, even if such a sphere springs, as I emphasize in the ensuing chapter, from a rigid patriarchal management of labour. The non-hierarchical relational exchange with the land and the wild emanates, as I mentioned above, from a desire of creating and protecting a mythical 'female garden'. Remarkably, the Ballew family's home is described as a place not distinct from nature, and the customary dualistic boundaries between outdoors/indoors or wilderness/domesticity are thoroughly upended.[96] The house is brought to life in the following manner:

> The windows were covered with ancient vines—Virginia creeper, honeysuckle, hopvine, and ice vine; so that save through the doors the fierce white light of the summer sun never came fully, but was broken and reflected by the many moving leaves into a green tinged shadowless light like that of some cave half buried in the sea, but scented at times with flowers and with dew lingering in the house shadow until long past afternoon. (Arnow, *Hunter's* 13).

The wooden cabin is described as organic, breathing, and the shadow-play of leaves and wind inspirit the home place with a sense of natural vitality. Thus, the line between the domestic unit

[95] I am further reminded of Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) where a young Janie finds in a blossoming pear tree not only a source of gratifying identification, but a valuable and wise teacher as well, specifically regarding her own sexuality.

[96] I am reminded of two other works of fiction, Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!* (1913) and more recently Delia Owens' *Where the Crawdads Sing* (2018), where the main character's houses are upraised from nature itself, incorporated thoroughly in the soil or the landscape. In both instances a deep 'self-land fluidity' irradiates from the home.

and enveloping nature is not easily discernible. Considering this passage from a pastoral perspective, it is interesting to note how a natural species overlaps and incorporates a human-made structure. I am indeed recalled of Dykeman's words, stressing that "the farm was only a minute human patch laid at the foot of the great wooded mountains in the midst of hundreds of acres of unexplored wilderness" (*French Broad* 63); a pristine middle landscape, devoid of assailing counterforces seems, in this specific geographical context, difficult to find.

In that sense, the 'American Eve's pursuit of domestic unity gains such narrative proportions because its depiction does not entirely extricate or alienate women from their lands or enveloping nature. The household sphere is not an off-closed arena dualistically opposite to that of nature. In contrast, the land is presented as another, perhaps even most resourceful room of Milly's home. This enlarged field of domesticity did in many ways respect local ecological wealth (Kolodny, *The Land*). Nature is readily invited into the home, and its walls become somewhat less isolating, constrictive.[97] Additionally, as I will argue below, what is normally understood as domesticity, or the private and passive homestead is subverted and extended in the novel. Burge agrees when she affirms that the in Appalachian context "women (…) are active participants in what is defined ideologically as the man's world" (69) or, the outdoors, pertaining to what Drewitz-Crockett theorizes as a form of "heroic domesticity" (2).

In fact, what Schwartz labels as the traditional "domain of women" (18), or the nineteenth century pristine domestic image, is enlarged and beckons to a harmonious fluidity between home and land, human and non-human. Ecological/geografical factors, as well as an enduring and self-reliant female spirit, are the reasons Sidney Farr proposes for this enhanced continuity ("Appalachian Women" 11), acknowledging these characteristics to be an ongoing incarnation of "frontier women in pioneer days" (idem). In my vision, the feelings of sublimity and peace that female literary characters emote when in or near the home sphere (Miller 3) not only embody this "pioneer days'" ideology of safe embeddedness, they also constitute a gateway that opens to a less restricted enjoyment or worshipping of nature, otherwise condemned by religious discourse or social gender roles. As Milly creatively devotes herself to cooking and canning food, or to sewing, her yearning for, and indeed reconciliation with, the outdoors astoundingly surfaces. After a hefty day of farm work, Milly encounters solace and repose in sewing. The narrator affirms, "on hot days like this she put the machine in open door where she could look out across the fields to the Cow's Horn and feel the Western breeze that drew

[97] In one of Elinore Steward's letters for instance, she expresses her wish of "getting a little of this big, clean, beautiful outdoors" in her friend's narrow and lonely city apartment (220).

up the valley" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 13). The conventionally enthralling walls of the home are thrust open and aerated, and sewing becomes a pretext rather than an obligation. The fields, the apple trees, and breeze are all invited as to partake of Milly's mental and imaginative, rather than physical experience.

Bessetti-Reyes conceptualizes the 'American Eve' as one who shifts between the home sphere and the outdoors, one who esteems the wild while not eschewing the ritual of housework (2). Groover points to this as well, when she accentuates the female capacity of fruitfully "mediating between (…) nature and a domestic realm" (18). What follows is that the landscape morphs, quite literally, into a mindscape, recalling what Leo Marx illustrates in a different context as "a symbolic structure of thought and feeling, a landscape of mind in which the movement in physical space corresponds to a movement in consciousness" ("Pastoral ideas" 263).[98] Narrative-wise, the modulation and invasion of sound and colour render the humming of Milly's sewing machine, a token of domestic virtuosity, insignificantly dull against the mounting music of farm life. This means that the home sphere is here not represented as a passively insipid or uneventful arena, but, as Nina Baym suggests, one of creative significance and mental interaction (quoted in Groover 3).

Interestingly, Groover envisages domesticity as a "sacramental activity", a cyclical, rather than linear, enactment whose meaning lies "not in the tasks themselves but in the relationship that domestic ritual establishes among the housekeeper and other household members" (24), such as the dynamics between Milly and her children, her husband, the animals or the land. Indeed, this arrangement of pastoral equipoise induces Milly to a proud recognition of her self-reliant role: she toys with the realization that she had "never run out of milk and butter" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 14), as on another occasion she praises her own skill for letting her "cabbage always grow so fast that worms didn't have a chance" (379). She does envision her sustenance as a sacred performance that opens a pathway into the outdoors, while it also harks back to the lives and knowledge of her fore mothers. Hence, Milly garners a form of genuine appreciation and respect for the 'garden' that cradles her, without ignoring how she herself, and those many before her, have contributed to its composition.

I do not mean to say, however, that in the novel overall experience of, or embeddedness in nature is exclusively experienced by female characters, or, for that matter, through domestic

[98] The work of Robert Macfarlane comes to mind. In his *The Old Ways*, the author and environmentalist argues similarly, and surveys the extent to which 'inner landscapes' may be shaped and affected by outer geography (94).

sublimation and transformation. Thoroughly represented as an outdoors individual, Nunn experiences, at times, this 'point' where inward and outwardness meet, more easily, as the novel incorporates many passages evincing the character's deeply personal and sensitive connection with the land. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to find the ways in which those characters conventionally not consigned to a wild or outdoors spatiality still actively endeavour to gain access to it, notwithstanding, indeed, the many ways in which nature is intersubjectively experienced, also by male figures. Indeed, peacefully making his way up the valley, searching for his sheep, Nunn often stops, for instance, "to look at something, long and intently, with the pleasant light that was the beginning of a smile in his solemn eyes" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 302). On another occasion, 'fox troubles' put to rest, Nunn is described as empirically 'taking in' nature, while cutting his corn field. Like Milly on her porch, Nunn's conscience is pleasantly invaded by "the sight of the wild sunflowers growing in the sun along the river, the river itself, blue and sprinkled with red and yellow leaves; and the red and white striped morning-glories that bloomed among the corn" (269). What the character's reactions often evince, however, is a sudden jolt of curiosity and amazement at the existence of something temporarily forgotten, suggesting a rupture of his growing state of obfuscation or indeed detachment that the compulsive quest substantiates. Indeed, "it was too fine a day to waste worrying over King Devil: it was good to be a man to be cutting corn on his own land" (270).

Additionally, let us recall that Kolodny's image of 'garden' has, in this specific context, taken the shape and proportions of a self-sufficient farm. Molasses making, for instance, relocates the housework to the open fields, offering both Milly and Nunn the opportunity to experience their 'garden' in a raw, earthly and unmediated manner. What is more, while this is hard and trying work, "Milly liked all parts of it" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 24), feeling, again, a form of untasted and fleeting freedom, that positions her in a complex chain of communities. The narrator emphasizes how Milly experiences delight as she is "reaching for a head of cane, golden brown and shining, she and the cane head alone an instant together against the blue-silk sky" (idem). The character experiences a quasi-holistic form of communion with the plant, a conception of self and other that firmly contradicts our contemporary atomistic individualities. In addition, the 'blue-silk' dome that towers above her indicates a sort of fourth dimension, one of possible liberty. I will pick up on this idea of transgression in the following chapter, when analysing the different woman-animal connections as developed in the novel. This epiphany of unity and bliss is contrasted, however, by a "second's sadness at the emptiness of the sky" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 24), the character moved by the awareness of having to pull the canes out of

their soil, the freedom of their own blue skies unequivocally forfeited. Other instances showcase the character wavering between a sense of gratitude and a feeling of light remorse, whenever consuming the product of her animals or reaping plants from their own soil. What is at play here is a form of sensitivity that corroborates the idea of 'ecological self' neatly: "a type of relational self, one which includes the goal of the flourishing of earth others and the earth and the community among its own primary ends" (Plumwood, *Feminism* 154-155). In fact, failing to respect the plant's primary telos, interferes momentarily with Milly's own well-being.[99]

Furthermore, the characters' 'ecological' and 'social self' is, in the novel, consciously rooted in a sense of community. While women like Milly or Sue Annie "show a desire for community" (Drewitts-Crocket 4), a form of close partnership with other women as well as with animals and plants (Eisler, "Gaia tradition;" Merchant, *Earthcare*), Miller goes further to affirm that "the role of the mountain woman in relationship to her family is analogous, in fact, to her role in the community" (10). Indeed, the laudable Appalachian "female agency" Patricia Beaver stresses in her work is community sustenance and protection ("Women in Appalachia" xvii).[100] Part of Milly's daily sense of fulfilment is derived from the anticipation of "Lizzie, the black heifer, feasting on cane fodder with the little black calf" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 24), the "mounting pile of chicken feed" (idem); she imagines her "fat hens pecking at the cane heads" (idem), and reciprocates Sue Annie and other folk's help with a share of the day's produce. Here I must stress that this communitarian practice of care corresponds to what Halperin has envisioned as a typically Appalachian form of kinship binding the ideals of family, land, and community into a "holy trinity" of local values (40).[101] Indeed, the above related scene further reminds me of Cuomo's axiomatic assertion included in chapter one: "the flourishing of others may ultimately serve one's own flourishing, or the flourishing of one's own community or species"

[99] With Milly's well-being in particular, since she seems to recognize or link these forms of 'obstruction' to her own cultural experience. I recall that this is the contextual fundament of my present ecofeminist analysis: a form of mutual oppressive experience and its resultant woman-land allegiance.

[100] Several Appalachian authors have all linked community effort or 'spirit' with social isolation and loneliness, most experienced by women and children (Chambers; Bell Miles). Whereas feeling of loneliness are often tied to geographical conditions and a lack of accessway, Arnow's work sheds light on how possible alienation is worsened by patriarchal oppression and management.

[101] Both Halperin and Beaver (*Rural Community*) forward excellent studies on kinship systems in Southern Appalachian communities. Beaver argues that kinship allows people to relate to a shared ideal of past, and thus obtain social cohesion: "kin-ties connect community residents into a system that gives personal identity through the expression of common roots, common ancestry, shared experience and shared values" (56-57). Additionally, Halperin draws on James Brown's study *Beech Creek*: *A Study of a Kentucky Mountain Neighborhood*, stressing how family groups, scattered among different households or even communities, descended many times from one line of original settlers. A strong care-oriented motivation sprang, according to both Brown and Halperin, from the fact that settling required the help and reciprocal cooperation between different family nuclei.

(*Ecological Communities* 64-65). Following that line of thought, Cuomo's ideal resonates strongly with the 'American Eve's primordial will: an act of place-making, a "way of relating to the wilderness that is altogether different from men's" (Kolodny, *The Land* 65), by giving more importance to intersubjective dialogue within and between different yet interrelated communities.

Moreover, Miller approaches the harrowing gender divide prominent in twentieth century Appalachian literature as a consequence of the historically distinctive construal of physical place and its web of nonhuman others, much to do, as we see in chapter three, with the dualistic labour divide. Indeed, opposed to a specifically female interest in protection and conservation, may remain "man's [ideal] to subdue and conquer" (Miller, 5). As I expounded above, Nunn's hunting compulsion stems from the need to overmaster the timeless prototype of the 'rival beast', yet rather than reductively defining his relationship to the land, it seems to point at what I argue in chapter three as a form of progressive detachment and alienation from it. In truth, as we just saw, when oblivious of King Devil, Nunn demonstrates an empirical and emotional sensitivity to the other forms of existence around him. Furthermore, Kolodny argues that while hunting and farming were conventionally considered masculine pursuits, and even if, as Arnow declares, good farmland was what caught the settlers' attention when first crossing the Appalachian Cumberland (*Seedtime* 78), a full-fledged and subsistent agrarian ideology only started to supplant that of the prototypal lone and rugged hunter when women or larger families flocked to the Kentuckian frontier (Kolodny, *The Land* 67). The gradual establishment of a certain agrarian order and shared ideal of community suggests the reason why, perhaps, Nunn is publicly admonished: "he ought to farm more, and hunt less" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 21). In a way, this conceptually relates the female myth of place making with the yearning of 'respectfully' living off or with one's own land, even if an agrarian or yeoman self-sufficient enterprise weighs, in the end, most heavily on female subjugation. It was, after all, a gathering subsistence economy, historically the purview of women, that strengthened the bonds of *oikos*, and not necessarily the nomadic hunt (Bookchin, 60).

Edward Casey endorses Miller's stance as he argues that "it is by our bodies that we belong to the place-world" (quoted in Buel, "Space, Place" 165) and while there is no denying that social gender expectations hold implications on individual forms of embodiment, they certainly differentiate the ways in which such an intricate "place-world" (idem) is personally experienced and construed. As I expand in my next chapter, our situated or emplaced bodies become themselves disputed places. Additionally, in a literary context, and as I introduced

above, women appear to relive a particular construal of wilderness through their harmonious interrelationships with the land. Indeed, in her *Seedtime on the Cumberland*, Arnow illustrates how the concept of gardening embodies not only a rite of passage, coming to terms with new and challenging reality, it further becomes an exercise of symbolical unearthing. Arnow deeply praises the activity of gardening as a reminder "of other farm wives" (*Seedtime* 40), when excavating small relics of "those others who had known and loved the valley" for ages (idem). Hence, from a female perspective, the extended 'garden', just as the domestic unit, becomes a symbolical ground, where a sense of present and past become genealogically unalloyed. This hint of 'timelessness' seems ubiquitous in Appalachian writing and is much enforced, as we see in the following chapter, by a strong religious projection onto the landscape.

What follows, thus, is that "the landscape evokes memories, and these memories in turn determine how the landscape is represented" (Newman, 111). In fact, as Drewitz-Crockett posits, a sense of past is meticulously preserved through the crafts of narrative, storytelling, and mythmaking (4) evoking an assemblage of emotive collective memories that seep through the surface of physical reality itself. Likewise, Annie Dillard has eloquently noted that "you can heave your spirit into a mountain, and the mountain will keep it" (3), and possibly become it. Hence, Milly extracts significance and fulfilment from observing "the black hills against the stars and (…) the Big Dipper riding straight upon it's handle" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 34), evincing a complex interplay of rootedness in, and hankered 'freedom from', stirred up by a *timeless* and natural manifestation. I use this phrase 'freedom from' as all female characters evince a desire to evade the 'cultural landscape'—nature which has crystallized into a form of cultural stagnancy that engenders the sanctioning of multiple patriarchal and oppressive mechanisms.[102] Conversely, for Nunn, the same sky, mountainous landscape, or constellations may be impregnated with the seeds of despoliation, and its entailed frustration, for they mock his relentless failure: "he was tired of the stars and wind" (37). Much against his own will he knows the celestial tapestry better than his own sheets (38), and yet, the primordial drive to conquer proves too strong.

[102] Snyder in his *The Practice of the Wild* speaks of "the place-based stories people tell", and how they make it hard, in a way, to separate the land from its people and their collective memory/identity (7). The land and its people seem to become united, enmeshing story, myth and memory with the geography of physical place. This is perhaps one of Suse Ballew's principal difficulties, how to combine a love for nature, considering the stifling and castrating limitations it bestows, due to its 'humanized quality', with a growing need for emancipation. She yearns, thus, for territorialities that are not socially occupied, so to speak.

This crevice takes visible shape along the narrative, as place is imagined and experienced in different gendered manners, broadly encoded with the two-fold mythic frontier narratives that I have been exploring. Indeed, Milly, on top of evincing a solid bioregional scope of knowledge, can also, at times, give herself over to wilderness, and respects, if in an awe-struck manner, the forceful elements at play outside the outlines of her own garden. Interestingly, contrary to Nunn, no desire to subdue or measure strength is recorded here, Milly is in power with, rather than experiencing the necessity to have 'power over'. In the company of Sue Annie, she whole-heartedly gives herself over to the "invisible hand" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 384) of a fog-ensconced and ferocious river tide, as to help a child come into a neighbouring community. I will return to this passage as it constitutes the denouement of the narrative, the moments leading up to King Devil's fateful capture. Besides a stunned confidence in the forces of nature, these women exhibit a special affinity towards each other, a friendship that intensifies in the eminence of danger, yet which also visibly thrives in the prospect of freedom that this geographical territoriality can offer. For the proper significance of this terrain, I return to Snyder, who envisions wilderness as a place where "potential is fully expressed" and found (12) especially, as I illustrate towards the end of this piece, for female characters who seek a sense of self outside the perimeters of a patriarchal cultural landscape.

Furthermore, when the two women master the boat to the riverbank, disembarking at the foot of a hill, a long coiling and reckless climb awaits "along the slippery banks" or "narrow ledges" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 387), a narrative section that thoroughly re-imagines the female domestic terrain and its associated care practice as a profoundly heroic act. Arnow succeeds at last in locating the American Eve where she belongs, beside men in wilderness, yet with a slightly different vision and purpose. While climbing the steep slope "Milly gritted her teeth and scrapped with her knees, and pushed with her toes" (389), while enviously wondering if, reaching Sue Annie's old age, she would still be capable of such tiresome and reckless a journey. Ultimately, these gendered contrasts keep recurring and furnish a narrative deflation of the hunting story, as much as they question gender performativity and the preordained notions of the American Eve's passivity. Ecofeminist Vandana Shiva's insightful words come to mind: a "dominant concept of power" (*Staying Alive* 15), aggressive, violent, and disembodied, may be sharply contrasted by the "alternative concept of non-violence as power" (idem), evinced by these two characters. Confronted by the depths of an abyss, Milly fully owns the vitality of her position and queries "poor Nunn, how could he ever manage alone?" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 386), in an excerpt that forwards strong and implicit authorial irony.

Wilderness and the Lines of a New Female Performativity

The above-mentioned passage enables me to approach the paradox of women's gender roles and performativity more fully. Truthfully, Arnow reimagines the full extent of the domestic arena and re-assesses women's physical/psychological strengths, which, while requested by the land or settlement circumstances, were further not celebrated in the myth-making processes of the dominant patriarchal mountain communities. In that sense, Linda-Wagner praises the novel not only for the celebration of women's painstaking hardships but also for their commendable deeds in an environment that demands so much self-sacrifice and curtailment. The critic maintains that "the true acts of heroism belong to Milly or Sue Annie or Lureenie: crossing the flooding river to bring a child, doing inhuman amounts of work for the benefit of all, learning to exist with next to nothing" (74). This 'existing without' becomes at once one of the most challenging and laudable values of Appalachian culture. As Chambers writes in her memoir, "it didn't feel as though we were poor" (18), for a sense of need often sparks different forms of creativity and sustenance.

In contrast, Kolodny (*The Land*), and Besetti-Reyes both envisage the mountainous and densely forested geography as an imaginatively masculine territory, the domains, as I argued above, of a Daniel Boone or a Natty Bumppo. Women on the other hand, tended to draw inspiration and possible liberation from the openness of the American planes, as Willa Cather (1873-1947) so eloquently shows in her Planes Trilogy (1913-1918). For women displaced to a "wooded wilderness" or frontier (Besetti-Reyez 27), however, the outdoors became a field "in which usually strict gendered behaviours and identities could be altered" (Besetti-Reyez, 19), even though not thoroughly demolished. For most of Arnow's fictional women, then, interaction with place, a terrain still broadly considered as wilderness, encodes, even if in an unconscious manner, this shift in behaviour and mentality. In this context, as much as a re-experience of the place-making myth, Milly's heroic interplay with the landscape also becomes a test to her socially prescribed role and behaviour. Hence, as I illustrated above, the character's domestic work embodies a continuing challenge to what the twentieth century middle class American woman, or, the eighteenth century East Coast colonial woman (Clap 60) both recognized as their gendered conventions, or the overall meaning of their domestic areas.

Moreover, several authors and critics have extensively drawn upon the virtues of self-reliance, courage, and will for community, so characteristic of Appalachian women in fiction. Even though galvanized by the rugged terrain, these characteristics emulate the form of physical and psychological readiness or adaptability required by the frontier's state of wilderness or overall

life conditions. When harking back to the histories of women settlers in Appalachia, one notices how "women moving from cities to Appalachia [and many other rural spaces] often experienced an expansion of the gender roles to include activities and behaviors that were previously denied to them" (Mullins 22). This is not to say women remained no longer subject to patriarchal domination. On the contrary, while they adopted an expanded role in some respects, their individual freedom in the community and the family unit remained ever second to that of their husbands, under the rule of a patriarchal God. In *Hunter's Horn*, for instance, Milly's arsenal of physical skills, such as the tending of livestock, chopping wood, or, as illustrated above, her uncluttered contact with the forces of nature, corresponds to some of the activities that were conventionally regarded as "unladylike and uncivilized" (Mullins 22), yet they remain ever bound to domestic purposes, a domain of labour that is, as explored in the following chapter, defined by a patriarchal design. This also most certainly contributed to the devaluation of the region as "primitive" and "savage" in the eyes of a mainstream and middle-class America, as I have mentioned previously.[103]

Interestingly, while Milly shows great skill in firing Nunn's gun, she does it only once in the narrative, and from a place of ultimate despair. While she excels at a typically masculine activity, she only chooses to do so as to conjure the help of Sue Annie or anyone nearby, in the throes of childbirth: "she knelt on the kitchen door, set the old number ten gauge on the doorsill so that it wouldn't knock her down, and pulled the trigger" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 237). The gun in Milly's agile hands overturns not only her own performativity, as much as the meaning of the gun itself: a symbol of power and death is employed here, even if obliquely, for the generation of new life. Furthermore, while Cratis Williams points to the strict division of labour in Appalachian communities (quoted in Miller 26), Walsh and other historians have shown how male and female performativity may, at times, overlap in the context of settlement. Consequently, the substantiation/preservation of a solid community could only be achieved if primary importance were given to interrelationships: "relationships between men and women were more important than individualistic experiences by either women or men" (Walsh 248), creating the ripples of disturbance in preordained social roles. In narrative terms, however, Arnow brings these interrelationships to the foreground, and elucidates how women's altered

[103] Elinore Steward firmly believed in the dislocation of individual women to remoter rural or wild areas. Homesteading and farming, she argues, is not only an antidote to the crippling domination and restrictions many women suffered, but it would equally mend urban problems such as violence, hunger, or economic shortage, of which women are the primary victim. Not disregarding difficulties of frontier life, however, the author affirms: "we all got so much out of so little" (211), a confession that reminds me of Milly or Sue Annie's lives as well.

behavioural patterns not only change the sphere and meaning of domesticity, but propitiate fragments of a unique bioregional knowledge, which renders the narrative's female characters, as Eckley has suggested, indeed as authentic and non-essentialist "earth mothers" (*Harriette Arnow* 75). The fact that a very individualist or else alienated male role is carved out in the novel—Nunn becomes, as intimated above, isolated in his own compulsive state— expands the author's opportunity of developing a female-land relationship, mainly through the lens of domesticity, one that is contextual, not biologically innate.

According to both Drewitz-Crockett and Mullins, the mountainous landscape and harsh settlement circumstances lay at the taproot of this gendered expansion and the redefinition of domestic pursuit.[104] These conditions and circumstances, however overbearing, allowed for a different—and not radically separated—construal of 'outdoors' and 'indoors' spaces or conceptions. On the other hand, this continuity also naturally sprang from a sense of practicality, from the need to acknowledge nature as the ultimate reality itself. For Drewitz-Crockett, the mountainous terrain forwards "the impetus by which women's performances of and responses to domesticity assume greater meaning" (2), while it also re-establishes the meaning of domesticity altogether. In that sense, Mullins insightfully considers Appalachia "a unique space for gender roles to be both transformed and subverted" (22). What Mullins does not explicate, however, is that the core catalyst of change remains the landscape, since there is, unfortunately, but scarce change in the dominant patriarchal ideology. Consequently, women's identities, their broadened range of skills, and myth-making narratives are moulded after the requests of a specific and sinuous terrain, at times giving, at times unsympathetic, yet granting them the potentiality for transcendence and experimentation that is otherwise thwarted. Narrative-wise, this 'uneven' territoriality bestows characters such as Milly a form of "land-domesticity" that reshapes the "centre of receptivity and sociability" (Drewitz-Crockett 3) into a profusely heroic and ecological one.

In that sense, the role of protector/nurturer assumes bioregional lines as it "extends beyond the nuclear family to include the surrounding lands, environment and animals" (Mullins paraphrasing Bell 21), thus envisioning a wider scope of moral objects. For instance, as Milly meditatively goes about her work, she suddenly flinches at the absence of her youngest son,

[104] Clapp further argues that the years of the Civil War contributed much to women's grander performativity and care-sensitive ethics. This aspect is well illustrated in both Wilma Dykeman's novel *The Tall Woman* (1982), and Harriette Arnow's The *Kentucky Trace* (1974). Both works portray the communities of adapting and hard-working women in light of their husbands' absence. They relate the courageous acts of women protecting and defending their homes or communities against raiders and intruders.

Deb. As she darts out to find him, "heedless of snakes and her bare feet" (Arnow *Hunter's* 15), she sees him at last perched in a "close-limbed and brushy but high cedar tree on a limestone ledge above the water trough" (idem). As he obstinately refuses to come down Milly effortlessly climbs the high tree and lets him "undo her dress" (idem) in order to nurse him. Her anxious admiration for her son flows into a revering feeling for the tree that nests them both. Hence, the scene exhumes a profound sense of unity between three beings, engaged in mutual solidarity. Various other passages describe Milly's ability to chop wood, adjust the space of the barn for a new-born calf, or dig a hole in the family cemetery for the burial of her beloved hound Zing. All these examples blend two major aspects: an extended domestic concern or ecology radiates with an ecofeminist care-sensitive approach which is, in the narrative, upraised as heroic.

In addition, let us recall that ecofeminists contend all knowledge to be situated, and a discourse or perception of care to be shaped according to the environment/context in question (Lugonez; Haraway "Situated Knowledges"). Thus, as expounded in the previous chapter, a well-situated praxis of kindness yields a bioregional or 'place-knowledge' that pertains to the respect of natural boundaries and capacities (Snyder; Sale). Here the different strands of my arguments come indeed together: an attuned and reciprocal relationship with the land, one that in this situated context incarnates a specific frontier's narrative or construal of wilderness, women's accorded interstitial positions between different communities or centres of life, and their geographically widened 'domestic-land' areas of work, all coalesce in a thoroughly local form of knowledge, rendering them "dwellers in the land" (Sale, 41). Indeed, apart from the characters' admirable skills and abilities that I have underlined thus far—living with next to nothing, chopping, butchering, tilling, reaping, sowing, milking, canning, etc.—they above all know how to establish a dialogue of mutuality between the human and the biotic communities.

Wendell Berry has, in that sense, rightly noted that knowledge of place, a loving familiarity with one's locality, adds greatly to its preservation and protection ("Regional Motive" 69). On the same note, Kateřina Prajznerová considers Milly to be guided by a substantial bioregional philosophy, as she "reinhabits the earth sustainably" (103) and lives by the forms of natural boundaries that Snyder, among others, advocates. This particular kind of sensibility or knowledge blooms in later Appalachian literature, in the works of authors such as Wilma Dykeman (1920-2006) or, more up to date, Barbara Kingsolver (1955-) or even Annie Dillard (1945-) and contains the seeds of a more contemporary impulse towards protection shown by

Appalachian female environmental crusaders.[105] Mistaking her daughter Suse's escalating unhappiness and physical weariness for signs of poor liver functioning, Milly knows exactly what herbs and roots to gather, and where to find them. While gravely failing to understand her daughter's growing predicament—her premarital pregnancy and her longing for higher education—Milly nevertheless climbs her hillside to find the sassafras tree and dig out its reddish coloured root. It must be noted here that the smell of "fresh-dug clayey earth" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 379) that fills her with a rarely documented sensual pleasure remains, in a way, self-oriented;[106] it does not assuage her daughter's suffering, for she does not clearly grasp its source. While bodily pleasure is, in fact, largely omitted from the narrative—perhaps the patriarchal instrumentalization of women's bodies leaves scant chances for sexual enjoyment[107]—Milly visibly experiences bodily pleasure when united with the earth. Instantly does she become aware of what she must offer in return: by grabbing a handful of soil she notices that "it was dry enough again to plow" (379) and should thus restore its health, so to speak.

Hence, this is where the lines of an ecofeminist and bioregional philosophy may meet, as Judith Plant proposes in her essay "Searching for Common Ground: Ecofeminism and Bioregionalism". The harmonious respect and knowledge of the bioregion, the "geology, meteorology, history, myth, etymology, family genealogy, agricultural practice, storytelling, and regional folk ways" (Kowalewski 17) weld with an ecofeminist discourse of loving perception (Frye; Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*). Moreover, as Aldo Leopold expounds in his "Land Ethic", the fact that a moral consideration can be extended to the soil and its nonhuman denizens remains a testament to our capacity for non-instrumental "love, respect, and admiration" (223), often whelmed under the utilitarian expressions of the self. In that way, Prajznerová postulates that Milly's most abiding form of nurturance is, ultimately, offered to the land itself, to the regeneration of the "gullied, littered yard" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 4) of her farm, a single fraction of the larger ecological despoliation traced in the Appalachian Mountains. In fact, as we see in chapter three, Milly is certainly more capable of engaging in

[105] In her work *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed*, Elizabeth Bell alludes to several notable female environmental activists who stood up against the ravaging coal mine industries in Appalachia.

[106] This is a trope that I explore mainly in the following chapter: curiously, while Milly's character presents the clear lines of a 'socio-ecologically conscious self', she can, however, never truly understand or support her daughter, whom she must 'introduce' to the role and standards of (local) womanhood.

[107] According to Fiedler, the omission or fear of sexual representation is a trait more broadly American than Appalachian. Speaking of US authors, he claims: "they shy away from permitting in their fiction the presence of any full-fledged, mature women, giving us instead monsters of virtue (…) symbols of the rejection or fear of sexuality" (9). The female discovery of sexuality, juxtaposed to the uncharted aspect of wilderness, will be further picked up in the conclusion to my dissertation.

this form of dialogue with nonhuman nature than, say, with her own daughter, for whom a domestic role and the communitarian expectations of motherhood have lost all their allure.

Truthfully, Milly deplores the deep and eroded earth-wounds caused by the previous land tenants' either maltreatment or lack of sensitive tact, yet, startingly, she cannot feel Suse's swelling despair. She thoroughly faces the significance behind erosion and landslips from a larger and bioregional perspective and understands how it further affects processes of growth as well as the well-being of various interrelated organisms. Moreover, she equally feels the pain and shortcomings of the soil, as she inwardly scolds those who "never gave anything back, not even a fence rail or a shovelful of manure", (Arnow, *Hunter's* 17) to the now naked bones of her dwelling. In that sense, an unhealthy soil affects her personally, as it negatively interferes with her valuation of place, and tampers with the 'holistic purpose' of her domestic reach. The fact that Milly's earth-care further stiffens against Nunn's continual absence could be read, from an ecofeminist standpoint, as stemming from a place of empathy and mutual understanding. In a caustic patriarchal system, both women and nature become devalued, and an intersection of oppression(s) can, as I explore more thoroughly in the ensuing chapter, lead to discourses of multiple liberation.

Ultimately, as I have illustrated, Milly's care for human as well as nonhuman others gains notable and heroic proportions throughout the narrative, in part because it runs parallel to Nunn's expression of dismissal, neglect, and aggression. As Prajznerová observes, a discourse of positive interaction regales Milly with a feeling of familiarity, domestic integrity, and nativity to place, which agrees with Kolodny's narrative of female identity construction. In a remarkable passage relating the smoking of a cedar tree, a sporadic and local phenomenon that signals the return of spring, Milly is instilled with a kind of ecstatic joy, precisely because she "had never lived long enough in one place to get acquainted with all the paths of the sun through all the seasons" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 246). The gems of knowledge she whole-heartedly collects bestow her with a feeling of inclusion or indeed participation in the motions of nature. Thus, Kolodny's myth of the female garden as impulse to a holistic form of place-making, or rather place-sharing, and the enlarging of the American Eve's array of (domestic) skills all seem apt to describe Milly's feeling of home as "a form of 'membership' in the local ecosystem" (Prajznerová 104). As Adrienne Rich imagines in her poem "From an Old House in America" (1974), cited in my epigraph, wilderness was not consciously chosen or desired by these women, and yet it is, undeniably, part of who they eventually become.

Conclusion

Responding to the question of what it means to be a woman in the land of do without, the answer of Sandra Ballard seems, at this point, quite apt. She envisions the Appalachian Mountain woman as someone "who does not think of living in poverty, [but] simply of living" (146). Instead of naively yearning for a 'flower paradise', as some of her neighbours do, Milly "learned to be satisfied with Hollyhocks and Chrysanthemums (…) a grazing cow wouldn't eat" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 56)—she has long welcomed the proportions and properties of her 'Arcadia'. Indeed, I have started this chapter delving into the particularly female mode of place-construal that stands out in Arnow's *Hunter's Horn* and questioned to what extent it coincides with Annette Kolodny's concept of the American Eve. This possible connection to, or 'emulation of', frontier life became apparent to me because Arnow's fictional characters visibly interact with a spatio-temporal unity: the landscape itself cloisters the communities in an often idealized and mythical narrative of the past, a Garden of Eden of sorts. On the other hand, Milly displays a specific interaction with place, which can, in retrospect, be read as based on the ecofeminist values of reciprocity and respect, and which render, by means of domestic endeavour, space into familiar place. Furthermore, in the Appalachian context, the 'female garden' steadily dilutes into a form of self-sufficient agrarianism, which even though circumscribed to the labour of men in the official historiography, is celebrated in *Hunter's Horn* also as a female undertaking. In that sense, both the domestic unit and its circumscribing land become symbolical domains since (female) interrelationships with nature are mostly experienced from the threshold of the domestic sanctuary, engendering a continuous re-living of the place-making myth, without the commonplace dualistic erasure of the wild or outdoors. From an ecofeminist perspective, a home-based ecology enmeshes both a sense of home and land, and my produce glimpses of sublimation and self-liberation.

Furthermore, as I have mentioned in the opening of this chapter, Arnow skilfully interposes her female characters in a paradoxical position. While, as Jane Harrison has underlined, the agrarian myth of self-subsistence remains dependent on female and nonhuman exploration, a continuous re-experience or mythification of the past may equally thwart emancipation and safeguard patriarchal authority. Here, the words of Kincheloe and Pinar sound indeed ominously familiar as they point out that certain "constructions have taken on the power of myth and are naturalized and essentialized so that the memory of how things came to be constructed is lost" (quoted in Newman 106), obstructing thus a possibility of renewal, as well as the conscious will for it. In that sense, characters such as Suse Ballew or Lureenie Crammer,

a younger generation, yearn to escape this mythic construal of nature, a line of thought I shall return to below. Milly, however, allies herself to the complex 'natureculture' design, as it enables her to revise her gender performativity and the ways she operates in the enlarged home sphere; yet the ways in which nature as well as woman are culturally perceived and exploited, can be said to paradoxically hamper change and innovation. As we will see in the ensuing chapter, from a socio-cultural standpoint, while being a victim to this stagnancy, Milly remains, at times, unfortunately unable to separate herself from patriarchal tenets and expectations.

Hence, the practice of an "Arcadian ecology" (Vakoch 18), is one primarily concerned with the maximum good of 'nature others', as it engenders a form of practice that, in the best of one's abilities, aims for the teleological flourishing of other beings and the land. In that sense, what Harrison presents as 'the female pastoral', or the middle landscape as an area of flux, is not necessarily one where elements of both the poles of wilderness/culture or animality/rationality need to be dualistically contrasted, as we saw happening between Nunn and King Devil. I will return to this specifically female interstitial or intermediary position in the following chapter: even if women seem to be negatively juxtaposed to animals, the potential of transgression gifted by bonds of woman-animal kinship can begin to subvert the patriarchal corrosive discourse.

To conclude, I want to tackle one last passage of *Hunter's Horn* that is of great ecofeminist significance. One afternoon, on her return home, Milly unexpectedly shares an encounter with King Devil. Making her way down a limestone bank, she feels at once the presence of life intensely staring at her. An intuitive voice "made her know that some live thing was near" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 23). King Devil, as the wild animal in Faulkner's "The Bear", "did not emerge, appear; it was just there, immobile, solid, fixed in the hot dappling of the green and windless noon (195). When Milly identifies the flame-like fox, both remain enthralled by each other's presence and majesty. In a moment of anxious stillness and proximity "he looked at her and she at him" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 23) and Milly, even though recalled by the mounting loss of her chickens, couldn't help but feel a deep connection with the animal, marking the beginning of a bond of identification or mutuality with the being that "Nunn had chased in hatred and in anger" (idem). Milly wants to share this exquisite apparition with her accompanying son, yet Deb never sees the animal, bewitched by his own mother's gleaming amazement. This meeting connects Milly to King Devil through a dialogue of silent exchange, while it simultaneously juxtaposes both characters on the narrative plane. As I aim to explore further in this piece,

Milly, or more prominently still, Suse's body, becomes, just like the animal's, a coveted and dominated 'terrain'.

In ecofeminist terms, this passage eloquently aligns woman with animal, not biologically, but situated in context: both Milly and King Devil understand each other's ordeals as they eventually stem from the same source. What is more, this passage brings the complex interplay of commitment and boundaries to its narrative zenith: Milly thoroughly understands the continuity between self and other, as egoism and altruism blur in a non-dualistic fashion. Thus, she establishes what Plumwood synthetizes as "a relationship between [her] own interest and that of another" (*Feminism* 151). I cannot agree with Ganim when she observes, with a somewhat defeatist undertone, how women, just like the land and the mountains remain obsequiously "waiting for whatever action the men decide to take" (267). Indeed, as I see it, the greatest and most pro-actively courageous act delineated in the novel pictures Milly withholding her brief reunion with, and the location of the fox from her husband, who happens to chase the animal that very night. Milly's silently rebellious act is one of love and prospects a coveted form of self-liberation. She attempts to salvage what she or her daughters can only dream of: the unhindered freedom that wilderness has to offer.

Chapter 3: The Place "Where the Ground is Uneven"

"The case of the animal is the case of the woman" (Edith Ward quoted in Adams 219).

"But the darkest scriptures of the mountains are illumined with bright passages of love that never fail to make themselves felt when one is alone" (Muir 67).

In a curious passage in *Flowering of the Cumberland,* Arnow recognizes the quintessential presence of farm animals in the day-to-day experience of the Kentucky mountaineer, while she simultaneously accentuates the importance of encompassing their expression in her textual fabric. The author consciously reproduces the universe of farm life, as she recounts: "any forted farm (…) was a world of animal sounds—squealing, gobbling, nickering, bawling, bleating, grunting, howling, barking, neighing, meowing, (…), whining, cackling, crowing, potracking, and baaing" (213), a burgeoning dimension the reader retrieves in *Hunter's Horn* as well. Indeed, as we saw in the previous chapter, Milly's own emplacement invites a continuous manifest presence of "another" as an independent centre of value. This way, Arnow seems to incorporate in her work what decades later ecofeminist critic Patrick Murphy would defend as the necessity of a broader narrative inclusion of 'the language of animals' or a more generalized nonhuman life ("Ground" 152) in literature. The agglomeration of sounds, movements, feelings, and expression should indeed portray the animal as a "speaking subject" (idem), an agent of selfhood, partaking in multifaceted bonds of inter-relationships and thus contributing to the narrative enlivenment of place. In that sense, as Barry Lopez beautifully suggests in his *Crossing Open Country*, place must likewise be understood and lived in its minutiae: its bioregional fauna and flora and the multifarious, delicate dynamics exchanged between them.[108] On the other hand, critically looking at place is, as we will see in this chapter, critically looking at the knot of human-nonhuman, and, more obliquely, different human/social relationships as well.

In addition, Erica Fudge, who has written extensively on human-nonhuman, and specifically human-animal relationships, agrees that an individual nonhuman being may acquire narrative importance when prominently illustrated as participant in the web of larger relationships (*Perceiving Animals* 109) proper to the diegetic scope and overall potentiality of this specific

[108] I want to stress Robert MacFarlane's conception of place or 'the land', as an intersection between "transitory phenomena" and beings (255). Owed, in fact, in great part to the golden age of Dutch landscape painting (1600's), we still tend to envision landscapes as static, and tend to forget the 'effusive aliveness' that springs from its unstable and transitory quality.

literary vehicle, the novel.[109] Interestingly, in *Flowering of the Cumberland*, Arnow has mourned the loss of subjective agency most animals suffer, amidst our increasing anthropocentric mode of storytelling. Ploughing through early pioneer accounts, Arnow stresses how animals, while heavily relied on both for settling and/or agrarian circumstances, remained, in representation, many times nameless, characterless, and "only incidental to more important matters" (213). In reality, as the author best illuminates in her fiction, a cow, a mule, a mare, or a hunting hound are not only fundamental to the establishment and survival of the pioneer, and later, the self-subsistent farmer, they also flourish into beings of inestimable companionship with whom many women in particular exchanged forms of social and familial kinship (Walters 1). This form of human-non-human kinship forwards fertile ground for the ecofeminist, revisionist, and intersectional woman-animal concept that lies at the heart of this chapter.

In that sense, exploring the fluctuating degree of textual animal agency not only endows nonhuman beings with a deeper form of self-hood, but it equally discloses the many ways in which nonhuman others participate in and are, in turn, affected by specific social dynamics or relationships. In fact, as corroborated by Gaard, Estok, and Opperman, feminist geographer Joni Seager posits that "human-environment perceptions and values may be mediated through 'gendered lenses' and shaped by gender roles and assumptions", holding more truth still, perhaps, when one speaks of animals (950). If the realm of nature and its denizens—which in great part defines, as Torrance highlights, rural/agrarian life and reality (xvii)—remains construed and subjected to a more or less collective gendered vision, systems of intersecting oppression(s) will invariably emerge. A significant part of this chapter is devoted to a mutually enforcing, constructive, non-hierarchical and to a point voluntary woman-animal association that constitutes the potential for traversing liberational discourses, to women and nonhuman alike. However, I must also recognize that, as Walters or Scholtmeijer ("Otherness") have adverted, such bonds, far from being biologically determined or stemming from a specifically 'female psychological predilection', flourish from a subjacent patriarchal exercise of power. Strictly speaking, Arnow substantiates two vitally distinct yet interlinked forms of woman-animal connections that I use to break this chapter in half: a transgressive/subversive bond seems to germinate from a patriarchal repressive one. In that sense, and, as I intend to illustrate here, mostly female, yet at times masculine characters as well, may "subvert the assumptions

[109] Both Murphy and Donovan ("Ecofeminist Literary") envision potential in this specific literary medium as it proves inclusive of human inasmuch as nonhuman dialogues.

on which victimization is founded through allegiance with animals" (Scholtmeijer, "Otherness" 235), garnering and combining individual liberation with an ecologically deft animal welfarism. Yet, in a second part of the chapter, regarding repressive social, cultural, and religious mechanisms, I will illustrate how the female characters may reinforce and often participate in the 'ideological movement' that thwarts their own individual liberty.

It is worth noticing that Donovan ("Animal Rights"), Walters, and Holtman acknowledge a critically revisionist and flourishing woman-animal identification at the intersection of the novel's different narrative lines. However, all these authors base their visions exclusively on Milly's close to mystic experience with King Devil, most arresting perhaps, as I underlined in the previous chapter, for the representation of an individual animal transposing an imagined wild geography into a space of human and 'domestic' sociability (Jones). Nonetheless, a panoply of different forms of woman-animal communication interchanged closer to the home sphere have remained ignored, and appear equally important to me, in recognizing the significance of "human-non-human relations [that] are inevitably embedded in the complex spatialities of the world" (Jones 268). Indeed, even if nonhuman others may, at times, be valued for instrumental convenience and human benefit, this does, from a narrative female standpoint, not radically preclude animals from being "loved sentimentally" (Walters 64). To my understanding, the study of the different and intersectional human-animal dynamics proffers the distinct forms of self which ecofeminists have underlined, and which have been discerned in the previous chapters. In truth, in the novel, a patriarchal form of separate and detached self, and an intersubjective self (Gaard, "Living Interconnections;" Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*), a distinction that corresponds neatly to Tronto's "caring about and caring for" model ("Caring" 102), differentiates the expansive effort of understanding nonhuman others as independent others, from the wish to see them in light of individual needs or intentions. I want to re-emphasize here that these distinct responses are mainly owed to, or rather, influenced by, the central question of the hunt, since Nunn's detachment from the nonhuman world is exacerbated as soon as his own obsessive state intensifies. Milly, conversely, regards fox hunting as "idle foolishness" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 29), and rather than the occasional loss of chickens, it is her husband's irrational fixation that enchains the fountainhead of their family's alarming dearth.

On the other hand, in sequence to the previous chapter, and as a way of enforcing the purely contextual ambit of the woman-animal association, I want to briefly re-examine the space where most of these anthrozoological bonds eventuate: the domestic realm. First, by the

obligations of domestic labour, women are assembled with animals in a space that is as real as it is conceptual. As is usually the case in Appalachian literature, the fact that women work closer to animals, and are, also, their prime caregivers, eases the sparking of 'interspecies friendships', as well as a sense of reciprocity and allyship—Wilma Dykaman's *The Tall Woman* (1962) remains a most striking repository of such relationships. Yet, as we have seen, this space where female inasmuch as animal oppression becomes most punitive is one which embodies the nucleus of a nurturing, providing, and affective strength. It is perhaps best defined by Floyd, who sees it as a form of "heartland" (395), economically peripheral and backgrounded, yet a place where one continually feels the need to "come home to" (idem). As I maintained before, Milly is savvy to this dimension, as she often contemplates, joyously and fulfilled, "all the paths meeting at the kitchen door" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 379). Consequently, a locus engendering a 'feminine language' of sublimation and transformation remains also, in the Appalachian context, a domain with no quickly discernible boundary between an indoors dynamics and its circumscribing natural wealth, embodying, in that sense, an 'expanding heartland'. If, as I explored in the previous chapter, a more substantial fluidity between an indoors and an outdoors spatiality is ascertained, forms of interspecies boundaries become, I argue, blurred in much the same ways, and reinforce what I called the interstitial, 'intercommunal', or eco-social roles Appalachian women tend to assume.

Hence, this chapter, while ultimately bringing into light the complex relationships and intersecting mechanisms of domination that ecofeminism undermines, opens by recognizing the importance of imbuing fictional animals with a broader textual liveliness. I envision this as a quintessential component of this piece, not only for the fact that, as I underlined above, individual telos should be more acknowledged in any living, independent being, but also because the subversive revision or re-articulation of the narrative human-animal connections would indeed hail little critical significance, should not both human and nonhuman others enjoy greater narrative agency. The 'language of nonhuman beings' is a considerable aspect of the subversive and transgressive bonds *Hunter's Horn's* female and even some male characters engage in. In a first part of the chapter, I illustrate how meaningful forms of non-hierarchical allegiance emerge between animals and individual characters, which mostly succeed in finding liberation from the wound of oppression. In that sense, extended care values, the exercise of empathic listening to another nonhuman other, also aids to render the animal textually more animate. The broader second part of the chapter is entirely concerned with the contextual nature of the novel's woman-animal bonds of kinship, emphasizing the underlaying and conceptual

devaluation of both femininity and animals in the Appalachian cultural cadre. I investigate the reasons why local women are continually relegated or assimilated to the 'nonhuman' in the first place: linguistic connections, the ways in which women and animals overlap in speech patterns; division of labour and, by extension, women and animals' subordination to the domestic unit; the dissociation of femininity from rationality and a severe religious fundamentalism that curtails both women and animals' individual embodiments. It is important to re-emphasize here that while Milly seems able to glean from the non-human realm a fledgling sense of 'self-liberation', she is, paradoxically, not capable of deconstructing or adequately 'divorcing herself' from the castrating patriarchal system.

Animals and Textual Self-Hood, An Introduction to *Hunter's Horn's* Nonhuman Characters

A textually non-hierarchical human-animal interconnection must spring from the thorough inclusion of nonhuman others in the gamut of narrative agents and relational networks. A narrative human-animal connection which does not underscore the proper selfhood of animals (Carter and Charles) reiterates human hierarchical superiority, and may indeed perpetuate damaging Cartesian artefacts, for instance the belief that "animals are without feeling or awareness of any kind" (Cottingham 551).[110] Furthermore, as I suggested above, a full-fledged and critically constructive woman-animal embrace must create a non-dominative form of dialogue, where both woman and animal are given adequate protagonism,[111] and not solely, as Lynn seems to suggest, elevate woman to the position of "spokesperson" (284). This is not to say, however, that in *Hunter's Horn* interpreting and vocalizing nonhuman expression is not substantiated as a laudable female undertaking. As Adams has confirmed, both "women and animals are [often times] similarly positioned in a patriarchal world as objects rather than subjects", which may contribute to forms of mutual understanding ("Feminist Traffic" 219). A critical and potentially ecofeminist discourse should thus endeavour to transform both woman and animal into articulating entities. Indeed, prior to representation, both women and animals are born individual, independent, and self-directed beings. The ensuing quandary, further

[110]Various are the ecofeminist authors who have condemned Decartes and the overall pillars of Enlightenment philosophy. See for instance Warren (*Ecofeminist Philosophy*), Plumwood (*Feminism*), Merchant (*Death of*), Gaard ("Living Interconnections"), or Griffin. Indian ecofeminist Vandana Shiva goes as far as to declare the period of Enlightenment as responsible, ironically, for the "spread of darkness, the extinction of life, and life-enhancing processes" (*Staying Alive* xii).

[111]Both Barad and Sandiland have charted in ecofeminist texts a dangerous construal of nature as too passive, not enough an agent in its own survival processes. Rather than constituting a passive and victimized concept in the imagination of human beings, nature must be construed as a co-agent in the transformation of physical, earthly reality. Underlining the self-hood of nature is a strategy that surmounts the pessimistic doom-image that the work of earlier ecofeminists such as Griffin seem, at times, to present. See also Alaimo or Longenecker.

discussed in this section, arises specifically in that sense: how to write about a form of (animal) existence that lies outside our human condition and experience, especially when the boundary of this condition seems to reside at the root of our speciesist modes of construal in the first place.

In the cultural and geographical context of Appalachia, the general disregard for animals, the historically violent onslaught perpetrated against them,[112] or their commonplace literary obfuscation, as Arnow (*Flowering*) has herself pointed out, become highly problematic. Indeed, historically, most Appalachian families, broadly self-sufficient, raised a variety of animals which, apart from assuring daily subsistence, actively participated in larger webs of kinship/companionship (Walters). Erica Fudge goes as far as to maintain that "the proliferation of nonhumans in human society makes it impossible to recognize a purely human society" ("Introduction" 3). This engenders a space where a meaningful valuation of "life beyond the self" (Braidotti 13) can be successfully encountered. In fact, Milly or Sue Annie demonstrate a keen awareness of life beyond the limits of inwardness or self-perception, which leads me to argue, also, against a conventional image of family. As much as community cannot be referred to as a pristine network of human relations, so is the Ballew family not exactly comprised by an exclusive assemblage of human members. I am recalled of Hogan, Metzger, and Peterson's words, namely that nonhuman nature has always, even if unbeknownst to us, taught us about "love and the depths of community and family bonding" (xii). Hence, as a way to acknowledge nonhuman beings as participants in social and relational systems, I argue that, rather than employing or 'colonializing' them as "gauges of [their] inhuman limits" (McHugh 1), Arnow celebrates "a continuity between humans and animals" (Lynn 282), based on dialogical reciprocity and the textual depiction of nonhuman sentient agency/expression.

However, as Buell (*Environmental*) or Torrance have insightfully argued, animals cannot write themselves into our texts, and a degree of anthropomorphising generally surfaces in the author's attempt at representing 'animal reality', so to speak. Given this conundrum, it seems imperative to me that the author/reader who strives toward ethically sounder human-animal relationships in real life should create or conceptualize textual animals who are, in some degree or other, also able to "signify themselves", as Lönngren suggests (108). In truth, as Dillard writes, "admitting them [animals] (…) into my consciousness might heighten mine" (95). If we look at the profuse stories and myths of indigenous or tribal peoples, we can easily establish

[112] For a list of the animals that have suffered extinction in the Appalachian bioregion see Walters, especially p.14.

a correlation between the belief and representation of inspirited, speaking, and many times overly personified animals, and their safeguarding, if not lofty sanctification, in real life. Henceforth, when I speak of nonhuman agency, this is what I have in mind—the ethically founded choice of representing or reading animals as individual and independent beings, not mere phantoms of our instrumental ways or limited imaginations.

In addition, Fudge has referred to the "absence-presence of animals" (*Perceiving Animals* 2) in texts, the shadows of nonhuman characters that appear here and there in our Western canon, yet not serving a purpose that is, in some part, also individual, self-directed.[113] One of feminist ecocriticism's key purposes is indeed to bring 'othered' and backgrounded beings into light, that is, to the narrative foreground, the textually elided, or marginalized forms of life that are "there but not speaking" (Fudge, *Perceiving Animals* 2). Authors such as Murphy ("Ground;" "Rethinking"), Adams ("Suffering;" "Feminist Traffic") or Donovan ("Ecofeminist Literary"), at the forefront of this critical field, argue that a dialectics of nature should be included, and receive due literary attention, if we want our cultural conceptions of nature to change more positively. In that sense, Arnow's woman-nature allegiance becomes potential not only because it dismantles a source of common oppression—patriarchal ideology—but also because it further pairs up two culturally 'othered identities' which have unjustly served the production of our cultural, artistic, and economic systems, and have not always been granted the freedom, individuality, or agency they deserve. In *Buffalo Gals*, Le Guin declares that "in literature as in 'real life', women, children, and animals are the obscure matter upon which civilization erects itself" (231), and against which a patriarchal dominant ideology may seek self-aggrandizement.[114]

What is more, as we see below, both Milly and Nunn engage in relationships that are, narrative-wise, partly indebted to the textual vitality of the animal itself—the capacity of an "individual to act in the [literary] world" is here purposefully extended to the animal (Lerer 14). The novel's nonhuman characters are distinguished by name, gender, slight intentionality, and are often impregnate with an emotive and anthropomorphized character.[115] I must indeed

[113] Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1943) or the brothers Grimm's fairy tales include clear examples of literary animals. Yet, it can be argued that in these specific works they are not represented as self-directed. Indeed, in such instances animals are mostly used to voice human stories, human anxieties and conflicts, and become thus purely allegorical.
[114] See below the concept of "absent referent".
[115] While I am aware that attempting to represent animal agency by recurring to anthropomorphic traits may appear at first contradictory or pointing to a major "fallacy" in our intentions (Ruskin quoted in Buell, *Environmental*, 188), I equally agree to its inevitability, as we can only write/read texts from our own human condition/reality. If Leopold is right is affirming that no healthy relationship with the land can arise without a form of personal love

acknowledge that Milly's close intimacy with nonhuman life is kindled, also, by her marvelling at the fact that animals are sentient beings— "they've got might nigh human sense" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 212). Yet 'human sense' corresponds here, not at all to the dominant form of anthropocentric rationalism that engenders, as I argued in chapter one, a conspicuous and harmful rift between species; situated in this more female-oriented narrative context, 'human sense' is not destructive, not dominative. As I demonstrate below, it is women like Milly who are willing to capture this dimension more fruitfully. From the masculine narrative perspective, however, most of the time the 'animals' spirit' remains, so to speak, impenetrable. In truth, when considering Nunn, the reader encounters a handful of instances where the apparent alienation and detachment between self and (nonhuman) other, ignited in the text by his hunting obsession, recedes, and valuable glimpses of an empathic and relational dialogue substantiate the character. While anthropomorphising tendencies may risk, as ecofeminists have accentuated, an ensconced form of anthropocentricity—of forcing an essence of ourselves upon a distinct other—these certainly also aid in dismissing given attributes or characteristics as uniquely or accidentally human. The belief that certain emotions or traits are strictly human, and, when attributed to an animal, precipitously labelled as 'anthropomorphic', carries, also, slight anthropocentric prejudice. Why can we not speak of (some) shared attributes, or, in Linda Hogan's inspiring words, speak of "different skins with different intelligences?" (xiv). Due to Zing's docile, protective, yet playful character, Tom, one of Milly's deceased children, "had loved Zing like a brother" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 8) and this bitter-sweet remembrance seems to exacerbate Milly's affection even more; Zing becomes, in a way, her own child.

Moreover, in most cases along the novel, animals are not presented in clusters or herds; it is, generally, the individual animal that gains textual relief, meaning, the ability to engage in anthrozoological relationships, and the possession of a certain discursive relevance.[116] Whereas the woman-land allegiance, introduced in the previous chapter, points towards a more collective or general notion of nature, this chapter focuses on the idea of individual others, a key concept of ecofeminist philosophy. In truth, as I underlined above, the notion of agency in nonhuman nature respects the fact that "beings exist as individuals with inherent attributes,

and admiration, it seems commonplace to me that it will be personified, to a certain extent. A great example is Thoreau's Walden lake, which adopts characteristics of an almost human companion. See Thoreau and Buell (*Environmental*).

[116] Barad illustrates how a discursive capacity is mostly denied to nonhuman nature, for discourse is often confused with the notion of human linguistic codes (818). Discourse and communication are, from a biological or ecological perspective, a much broader occurrence. Certain corporeal or sensorial expressions for instance, become in that sense discursive and embody the form of agency I am delineating here.

anterior to their representation" (Barad 804).[117] Among several other ecofeminist thinkers, Hawkins has argued that nature should not be construed or reproduced textually as "undifferentiated and homogenous in its otherness" (164). In *Hunter's Horn*, for instance, one of the Ballews' sheep, Bossie Jean, gains a special texture in the narrative, and, as I will shortly illustrate, communicates with Nunn in a language he can only understand belatedly; the rest of Nunn's herd, jocularly known among the family as the "long list of remembered Bossie Jean Ballews" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 303), loses narrative prominence and individuality altogether. Indeed, as a cluster they are merely descriptive, backdrop elements. If we transpose this ideal of individuation to the social gender framework, Adorno and Horkheimer have both alluded to the importance of recognizing individuality as a fundamental right and principal indicator of (human) independence. They indeed affirm that in a patriarchal cultural framework "man as a ruler refuses to do woman the honour of individualising her" (87). Domination functions best, in fact, when imparted upon a homogenously othered group. In that sense, as expounded in my first chapter, the 'disarmament' of individuality encapsulates a key strategy of patriarchal oppression that is not easily uprooted, for the lack of existing difference.

Furthermore, the usurpation of individuality is what undergirds Adam's theory on the absent-referent status that animals have often adopted in day-to-day reality, inasmuch as in our cultural modes of portrayal.[118] The principal argument that runs through the author's *The Sexual Politics of Meat* is that at the core of our overriding meat consuming society, "animals in name and body are made absent as animals for meat to exist" (66). It is through the butchering, packaging, and selling—processes of commodification—that the touch with an individual and living being thoroughly dissipates. Additionally, as Adams further avers, "the absent-referent permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity" (idem) and most certainly as an individual. From this particular angle, the animal disappears not solely because it is valued as an economic product—its worth dependent entirely on consumption—but also because distinction or individuation disappears. 'Animals' or 'meat', employed as mass term or as a commodified product, eliminates the suffering individual that lived behind the marketed valuable. Adams' arguments are further useful in this chapter, as she unearths a parallel between the cultural exploiting and abuse of animals' and that of women's bodies, an issue I

[117] Huffer similarly argues that the epistemological, the abstract, may not sweep away the ontological, or the physically real (70).
[118] The concept of 'absent-referent' is also employed by Margaret Homans, applied to the historically absent position of women in the Western literary canon.

return to below when exploring local religious fundamentalist institutions in Appalachian culture.

Now, translating Adam's main argument into a literary analysis tool, as Donovan ("Ecofeminist Literary") and Murphy ("Rethinking") have successfully done, the reader is made aware of the startling similarities found between the ways in which animal status is utterly reduced in practicality, and likewise elided in its cultural mimesis.[119] Truthfully, as Donovan demonstrates, nonhuman nature is often employed textually as a source of metaphorical or connotative meaning:

> Much literature does not remain faithful to the absent referent and its story, its reality; rather literature—like other ideological discourses—twists, cuts, distorts, and reshapes the referent to fit the requirements of the signifier, whose identity itself is determined largely by its interrelation with other signifiers in the signifying text, its exchange value. Even literary texts thus reshape, obscure, and dominate the "literal", subduing it to the claims of the "figurative". ("Ecofeminist Literary", 163)

According to Donovan, it is thus imperative to rearticulate "the objects of discourse" as subjects in our textual production ("Ecofeminist Literary" 162). Animals should not only be conveyed as "supplements to human subject forms but rather as actors joining us in continuously shaping [the novel] alongside a range of other narrative forms" (McHugh 3), acquiring the kind of narrative 'self-signification' that I indicated above.

Following that line of thought, the notions of trans-corporeality or transgression become essential, for the interpretative and manifold 'interactions' of the character, inasmuch as the reader, with nonhuman others, is ever human-bound. The line that contours or defines the human self/experience requires imaginative transposition if the necessities of nonhuman others are to be thoroughly met. As Figs observes, this may prove a most complex task: "standing outside of oneself is a difficult process that rapidly makes one dizzy" (21). That is why, perhaps, some of the retold legends by American Indian writer Zitkala-Sa revolve around the complexity, if not near impossibility, of a human-nonhuman, or animate-inanimate inter-

[119] In ancient Indian culture for instance, profusely influenced by Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu religious traditions, aggression against animals seems to have been reduced by the imperative of *ahimsa*, which translates as non-violence. Akin to some American Indian traditions, its myths, literature and overall cultural representation of animals differ greatly from our own Western ways. As a more pronounced human-nonhuman fluidity is to be found—some cases even of human-nonhuman metamorphoses—biological extinguishment and unjustified violence perpetrated against nature equally diminishes.

transmutation or changeability.[120] I am inclined, therefore, to agree with Murphy's ("Rethinking") main argument as he calls attention to the responsibility of writing place as a space that earns form and existence laced in between its myriad arising relationships, most of them indeed nonhuman. The literary definition and representation of place calls forth what Buell has envisioned as an "imagery of relationship" (*Environmental* 180), meaning that the multifarious forms of interaction, yet more so the individuals from whom they eventuate, should be actively voiced in a text. Murphy expounds it most clearly: "the point is not to speak for nature but to work to render the signification presented us by nature into a verbal depiction by means of speaking subjects" ("Ground" 152). The exercise of transgressing boundaries, author and characters' alike, as an attempt to render an 'animal language' as collectively heard or understood, also proves beneficial to the human, subjugated and subjugating self.

Before devoting my attention to a few of *Hunter's Horn's* nonhuman individual characters, some clarification on the notions of animal agency and sentience seem imperative here. The idea of agency extended to nonhuman life has undergone critical reformulation over the past decades, in that not all thinkers agree on the many-fold meanings the concept has adopted (Lerer 14). In their article "Animals, Agency, and Resistance" Carter and Charles maintain that "animals are not simply passive victims of human depredations but active participants in human-animal relations" (323), and, as illustrated by Arnow herself, in the shaping of larger conceptions of environment and geography as well. In that sense, the author fictionalizes place not solely as a space where human narratives, myths, or modes of construal have been anchored to, culturally and historically, but also as a space enlivened by the consciously felt "human-nonhuman continuity" (Hawkins 159). In addition, as the studies of Brudzynski or Mark Bekoff disclose, animals are believed to engage in forms of emotional knowledge or response capacity that renders them, if not full-fledged agents, at least notable participants in complex networks of relational agency, as studied in a number of scientific fields.[121] While I am unable to assess scientific evidence on account of these matters, I argue along with Haraway that textual or literary agency may engender an ethical motivation that is more "committed to the flourishing of significant otherness" in real life ("Naturecultures" 3).

[120] See Zitkala-Sa.

[121] See Hawkins. Scientific fields of evolutionary and molecular biology, community ecology, human ecology, or population genetics have offered many results on the possibility of interrelatedness of all planetary life. Other authors I cite speak of "intra-action" in the same regard (Haraway "Naturecultures;" Barad). On a less scientific level, Buell as well as many others, envisions ecology as "a relational discipline speaking a relational language" (*Environmental* 200).

Besides, if, indeed, any form of 'social' clustering or networking is best demarcated by its relational aspect, and by (un)ethical motions of exchange, we must acknowledge that animals "actively participate in, refine, and frame processes of interaction" (Philo and Wilbert 16). In truth, if we cannot speak of purely human agglomerations, then fostering a broader and ethically more inclusive politics of representation/interpretation aims for a deeper understanding of the significant line where the fragility of human-set boundaries and the strength of animal individuality may occasionally meet or overlap. In truth, as Lönngren envisages, when "human exceptionalism and anthropocentrism" (110) are successfully put aside, a form of interspecies relationships or communication may start to flourish more imminently. Therefore, as Philo and Wilbert clarify, agency is not restrictively about an intentional, "innate or static thing which an organism always possesses" (16). The question is one of relational immanence, "emerging as an effect generated and performed" (idem), and this exercise of greater 'becoming' or 'emerging' is, in *Hunter's Horn*, mostly owed to a female-animal conjunction.

Due to the scope of this work, I can only briefly focus on some of the nonhuman characters that inhabit the imaginary world of Little Smokey Creek. As the author, inasmuch as her fictional characters, choose to treat animals by the personal pronouns 'he' or 'she', I will proceed to do the same here, not only as a way of staying faithful to the narrative, but also to emphasize what I am bringing to light here. The use of the impersonal "it" pronoun, to refer to animals occurs in the narrative as well, yet seems to impart a callous disregard or detachment towards the nonhuman other in question, and is often related to a narrative vein of instrumentalism. Hence, I proceed by illustrating the varied ways in which *Hunter's Horn*'s animals express emotions, desires, and reactions, leaving the reader more closely attuned to their own suffering, as much as their own general place-embodiment of the mountainous landscape.

Zing and the other later acquired hounds, Sam and Vinie, encompass the novel's most pampered and 'humanized' animal characters. Interestingly, "Nunn never seemed to recollect it now, but Zing had been hers [Milly's]" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 27) and while they participate in one of the text's most moving woman-animal bonds, the hound is mostly appropriated and abused by excessive hunting, until selfishly run to death. Zing has a rather short-lived narrative existence, yet he remains well cloistered in the family's mausoleum of shared memory. Even before the reader is introduced to the hound, Nunn pridefully boasts his comradeship, and marvels at his ability to express and react sensibly to joy, impatience, or bitterness. As Nunn is

out to town, buying commodified dog food, a hopeful way of increasing his old hound's strength and hunting instincts, the shop assistant throws in an extra few bones. Zing would certainly "love him [the clerk] like a brother" Nunn beams (Arnow, *Hunter's* 1). A few pages onwards, the reader realizes Zing is truly like an older brother or son: he looks after Milly's younger children—having saved them from death before; he plays a crucial role in Milly's household chores; goes to school and enjoys a special corner in the classroom; and participates in the children's play-time squabbles. Moreover, when he dies, he is buried in the family cemetery, earning a place next to Milly's departed children. It is not before long that Milly starts to interweave the dear remembrances of her lost infants with those of her newly lost hound; he lives thus, many pages on, through the powers of memory and storytelling.[122]

Additionally, upon Nunn's return from town, Zing is the first one to take notice of his approaching presence.[123] His lively joy is intensely contrastive to his disagreeable physical demeanour: his body is old and battered— "a great gaunt ugly beast with a ribby chest and knotted legs and a sad scarred face framed by long hanging tattered ears" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 4). Yet, ironically, the returning of 'his master' makes him "frisking like a pup" (idem). It is interesting to note that more than focusing on Nunn's return, Arnow accentuates the animal's expressed sensations. What is more, his attentive communication, his "deep joyful baying bark" (idem) informs the other family members of Nunn's return. I argue that textual animal agency is at play here not only when Zing imparts emotion, but more prominently when he feels the need of sharing his rapture with other human others, encapsulating a form of interspecies communication that is, additionally, extended to the broader plane of narrative retelling as well; the reader is alerted of Nunn's return primarily by Zing's emotional and corporeal expression.

Nevertheless, as he is a well-trained hunting hound, responding to Nunn's slightest signal is equally indicative of the unbreakable allegiance he pledges to his 'master', a form of dominance that is well imbibed within the dogs' upbringing and ultimate goal-orientation. Such behaviour, or extraneous manipulation, which some authors would dismiss as being "anthropomorphized inordinately" (Buell, *Environmental* 196), can also be said to be implemented here as a valuable illustration of the scope of a rural patriarchal mindset, and the oblique, at times subtle, forms of self-other detachment such a gendered ideology may entail. In that sense, from a patriarchal standpoint, social masculine expectation seems to overflow

[122] As I show below, hounds earn a special significance in Appalachian culture. Donald Davis devotes a chapter on their historical prominence called "Feist or Fiction?".
[123] Much Like Argos, Ulysses' old hunting hound, Zing loyally awaits the return of 'his master'.

into the realm of the animal as well, pointing to the alluded 'gendered mediating lenses' Seager and Gaard denunciate. Walters concurs, as she maintains that, in *Hunter's Horn*, animals remain strongly gendered—their forms of interaction with family members are in great part conditioned by social gender tenets (78). For instance, being a male dog, Zing is petted and pampered, also because he is good at what, culturally, a male 'paternal figure' is expected to excel at: protecting, providing, and saving—cardinal activities which imbue the animal with a posthumous hero-like quality.

Conversely, Vinie, a female hound appearing later in the narrative, becomes increasingly valuable, and hence exploited, almost exclusively for her physical looks, "more and more a thing to be admired" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 226) by the community of men. As will I illustrate below, Milly, and at times Nunn himself, understand and sooth downtrodden animals, suffering under the severing instrumentalism of their harsher "masters" (273).[124] Indeed, notice the following instance, where thinking of a neighbour's hound's happiness, Milly affirms: "she knew in her hound's way that freedom in the fine fall weather after being chained up and maybe teased by Willie's wild boys, was good" (272). Not only does Milly believe the hound can know, or has a certain capacity to evaluate and cognize, she herself seems to understand and translate the animal's sense of reality, simply because of shared context. In fact, the character understands that just like the female hound, and despite all let-downs or shortcomings, despite all forlorn dreams and wishes, life is better than how it had many times been. Not only do most female characters let animals 'speak', but a sense of mutual understanding, or non-hierarchical dialogue, begins to crystallize here.

Moreover, Davis maintains that "good dogs were not only valued for their hunting ability but also for their assistance in daily chores" (77) such as scurrying for food or assisting in household tasks.[125] Zing displays an amazing sense of altruistic and protective care that does not respond exclusively to patriarchal impositions. The "assistance in daily chores" (idem) for instance, ramifies from the culturally female labour purview that I have been exploring. When in times of grave dearth, the nourishment gifted by a heifer cow, or the wool shorn of the sheep's back spark in Milly a deep sense of gratification, for animals complement her own role

[124] Indeed, while Nunn often takes an instrumental approach to non-human others, it must be acknowledged that he is much less severe than, say Rans Cramer, a character whose 'animal cruelty' seems to know no boundaries, as we see below.

[125]Claude Shumate illustrates how dogs were expected to play a double role in frontier life and Appalachian culture: apart from responding to the call of the hunt, and "cleansing" the environment of dangerous animals, hounds were equally valued in the home space, complying to different functions and values altogether. (paraphrased by Walters 13).

of domestic giving. At times, it is Zing who produces meat without consuming the prey himself. So, a certain evening, when the hound proves unable to chew his beef or gnaw on his bone, due to his deteriorated teeth, Milly defends his solidarity and resourcefulness against the mounting choir of derisive comments, scolding her children: had it not been for their dog, "you all wouldn't be eaten possum tonight" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 9). Able to understand Milly's defence and immediate allegiance, Zing once again exhibits a performance of multiple emotions: "the old hound uncurled himself, opened his mouth in a big smile, and thumped his tail" (9). Truthfully, Zing repetitively indulges in forms of "social play" and communication (Bekoff 863) that reside at the heart of the constructive or transgressive human-animal relationships that I explore below.

Following that line of thought, rather than simply being fore-ordained, commanded by a stiff master-serfdom dynamic, I believe that Zing partakes in a field of ethical reciprocity, a solidarity kinship that is, once again, nascent of, or much associated to domestic values. In that sense, in the narrative, an uncluttered stance of 'caring-for' (Tronto, "Caring" 102) seems to disseminate also into the nonhuman dimension. The scene where the pups, Sam and Vinie, protect Milly's younger son, Deb, while he rests alone alongside the creek bank under the heavy limbed sycamore trees, is a solid example of such extended ethics. While beguiled and blinded by the richness of the overstory's biological interplay, he remains nevertheless vulnerable to the dangers of wilderness, snake bites or rising tides, for instance. The dogs, fully aware of "snake-smell" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 212) follow him with grave concern and responsibility, and "take over the care of Deb, much as Zing had done Lee Roy" (idem). Countless other examples where the perspicuity of the hounds meets with our concept of a care-ethic paradigm permeate the narrative.

What is more, while Deb languishes on the river tide, different species of birds "came to drink and bathe and fight and gossip and educate their young in catching bugs and hunting worms" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 212), exhibiting a form of species concerns that is in no way linked or related to the action or conscious of surrounding humans. Without any direct form of interference, the child becomes, as it were, part of this education as well. Arnow writes place in the lines of what Buell has called "a proper home for all creatures" (*Environmental* 194), an environment which, while shaped by cultural input, is "not [always] created in humanity's special interest" (idem). Writing this form of agency, or rather co-agency, foments a healthy human-nonhuman symbiotic interdependence.

In addition, next to the hounds, "Miss Betsey", the heifer cow (Arnow, *Hunter's* 285) remains Milly's closest nonhuman companion, as Arnow forges an interspecies relationship that is realistically tumultuous and volatile. It is by no means a sentimentally spotless connection, yet occasional flaws are solved through communication. When let down by Milly, the animal darts her a "startled heartbroken look" (236), or bawls loudly, and reconquers the compassion and understanding of her faithful ally more easily. Hence, the relationship does not crystalize through a language of oppression or hierarchical imbalance. While Betsey remains, in all effects, a domesticated animal, the narrative depiction of her own experiences, struggles, and feelings is not consumed by the human link of this bond. Indeed, as insightfully researched by Walters, several Appalachian literary works written by women hold the cow as an important being/element in female characters' extended kinship networks.[126] Lydia Mcqueen, the female protagonist of Dykeman's *The Tall Woman,* confides her most secret, and some socially more piquant convictions to her attentively listening cow. Additionally, as I have hinted at before, in *Hunter's Horn*, the birthing of Milly's last child is accompanied by, and presided over almost entirely by Betsey. This juxtaposition is meaningful insofar as Betsey seems to understand, as much as other community women, the pains, dangers, and wonders of giving birth.

In fact, one evening, despite her condition, Milly is coaxed out of her home by a loudly bawling Betsey, lamenting the recent loss of her own calf, and starts up the hill in answer to a distant and forlorn calling: she "bawled, sometimes angrily, sometimes with sorrow" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 232). This juxtaposition of Milly's fears of childbirth, her own past experiences, and Betsey's own grief become mutually enforcing narrative strands, as they reflect each other's sources of anxiety. More than that, jointly, they strengthen an effective and healthy woman-animal bond that opposes patriarchal management of reproduction that, as I elucidate below, harasses women as well as animals' bodies. Hence, amidst pain and affliction, Milly worries that "Betsey could *think* to run away" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 236, my italics). Again, not only does the animal seem capable to think, but Milly most effectively captures and translates these 'animal thoughts' to other characters and to the reader alike. I arrive here at the crux of my argument. Speaking of textually vocal animals has proven difficult if not impossible without alluding to those, who, in the words of Murphy "render the signification presented (…) by nature into a verbal depiction" ("Ground, Pivot" 152). In that sense, non-hierarchical

[126]Behind the quasi-sacred meaning of a cow resides the fact that "in dire times, milk from a cow would serve as one of the largest sources of caloric intake in a typical Appalachian household", and hence aid in a woman's familial/communitarian success (Walters 19).

forms/representations of relationality engender inter-subjective dialogue, which, as Hogan, Metzger, and Peterson have argued, is most fearlessly taken part in by women, yet not restricted to them alone (xiii). Nunn equally attempts to 'decipher' his hunting hounds' articulations, even though they mostly encapsulate the key to the eventualities of the hunting scene. The character marvels for instance at his hounds "talking a little" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 28), while on another occasion he tries to make sense of Zing's barking: "read[ing] it like the writing on a piece of paper half washed away by the rain" (38). Both Milly and Nunn show an adamant effort to understand the 'language' of their animals, even though their personal intentions and implications may remain different. I must acknowledge that Nunn's more sensitive approach often springs from the instrumental impetus of the hunting game.

Truthfully, nowhere in *Hunter's Horn* is the organic dance of life better enacted than by the arrival of spring, an annual hallmark of hope and felicity that quickens "all the life of the earth, people as well as flowers" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 249). There is a sense of equality to this, one that crosses boundaries of beings; it may even trivialize, momentarily, human-made or believed structures and territories: women, men, animals, and flowers are equalized when embedded in a view of broader ecological cyclicity. Notice for instance the following excerpt:

> Then the wild March winds came. They and the overfull creek filled the valley with thunderous song, stirring as a brass band, fullblown and playing a swift tune. The sun was hot and higher in the sky and all Nunn's household went mad and crazy with the breaking up of winter and the coming of the spring. The ewes ran away to the back hills; Betsey forgot she was an old heavy-with-calf cow and ran away, kicking her heels with a jingle-jangling of her to the canebrakes by the river. All day long the hens sang and cackled as if each had laid ten eggs. (Arnow, *Hunter's* 156-157)

Not only are animals part of the household, but all other of its members live by the same natural rhythm, textually signalled here by the stylistic use of alliterations. Ultimately, this passage reveals, better than any other perhaps, how in a rural setting the bonds of family are interwoven with those of a broader surrounding ecology, and while the possessive notion of "Nunn's household" might cause increasing instability to some characters, the reader is easily led to perceive how the great 'textual garden' of green is, in truth, everyone's household.

Human-Animal Connections: In Search for Transgression

As the reader has been made aware, Milly shares an affective closeness with her domestic, as well as with some wild, animals. I have tackled some such examples previously, and will, hence, narrow my attention mostly to the bonds of intimacy shared with the hunting dogs: Zing, Sam and Vinie. It is of great interest how hunting hounds, "symbols of a culture infused with macho aggression and menacing violence" (Kalof and Taylor 321), are, in the narrative, equally capable of shifting to a performative array of values not related to aggression and violence. In that sense, the flow of compassion and solidarity interchanged between woman and animal brings forth a solid counter-image to that of the master-servant bond Zing, Sam, or Vinie, experience while hunting, or the socially gendered male-female dynamic. Milly's 'performed values', outspreading and altruistic, pertain to a form of "mutual understanding" or human-nonhuman "intersubjectivity" (Benjamin 1), that I investigate in this section as a profound source of healing to the oppressed 'human self' as well.

Regarding the transgressive/performative character of this exercise, Marlene Longenecker has posed the following, fundamental question: "how do our notions of ourselves and nature change if we begin to imagine nature as a subject?" (3). In other words, on a narrative plane, how can characters obtain self-transformation through the very endeavour of, as we saw, recognizing others as 'subjectivities', and, in turn, be willing to understand the utterances of a subjective nonhuman other? I employ the term transgression here, as a form of exercise/performance of altruistic values, which implies "shifting the locus of sympathy from within the self to outside of the self" (Hornbuckle 32-33). Sympathy flows from one inner source into another receptacle, situated on the outer limit of my being. It is in the flux of reaching further that female characters do obtain significant and transformative experience.

As I have argued in chapter two, the chasm between an embodied, intersubjective approach, and one of patriarchal and disembodied alienation is introduced in the first few pages of the novel. The warmth that emanates from an initiative of compassion such as assembling the chickens, and precluding them from dying in a mountain blizzard, is contrastive to the malefic joy John Ballew, Nunn's cousin, seems to take in terrorizing his scampering animals. Witnessing the strident cackling, Milly thinks of a wheeling hawk, yet John's "secret conniving sort of smile, like that of a child up to some unpleasant trick of meanness" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 20) tells her otherwise. Interestingly, the frightened hen starts "seeking the protection of Nancy" (idem), as it seems a warmer source of sympathy. Similar occasions occur with the

hounds multiple times, when, scared or in sadness they seem to place Milly's allegiance and nurturance above all else.

Even though well developed in her larger body of work, this constructive woman-animal trope is, in truth, not by any means exclusive to the author. One particular work I want to allude to here, despite falling outside the borders of the geo-cultural context at hand, is Le Guin's short story "May's Lion". Its narrative is structured in two fundamentally different stories. In the first part, May, an old woman living in harmony with her old cow, is one day visited by a dying mountain lion. Unsure of the consequences and her safety, she decides to call the sheriff who sees nothing as fit as immediately terminating the animal's life. The second and reconstructive part of the story leaps back in time, and portrays the old woman taking the other road, so to speak: she lets the animal die peacefully under her protection, constituting a gendered and hyper-conscious reassessment of care values and the import of their narrative representation.

As introduced above, Zing is an old and battered hound who indulges in considerable bouts of affective attention. After a particularly devastating hunt for instance, Milly practices compassion by staying up in the middle of the night, fetching kindle wood, building a fire in the cook stove, simply as to "warm him (Zing) some milk" (Arnw, *Hunter's* 33). In addition, Milly and the children, the latter whom, as Kulick would contend, live in the remaining bliss of an animate and inspirited world, not yet crushed by the forebodings of rationalism (362), often engage in a form of non-hierarchical dialogue with nonhuman others and try to discern their individual necessities.[127] In "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory", Donovan has compounded a list of works written by female authors that carve this form of human-nonhuman reciprocity, including indeed Arnow's *Hunter's Horn*. She states: "in many works by women, animals are women's closest companions and often there is a form of psychic communication" (192) shared between them. As I will develop in a second part of this chapter, this communicative flux springs indeed from a purely and context-related form of 'happenstance'—a forced relegation to a shared domestic labour space. Yet, I equally concur with Hogan, Metzger and Peterson: emotive bonds with animals—or human others for that matter—have, in fact, been systemically dissociated from hegemonic male and public performance (xii), an

[127] Arnow would pick up on this theme in *The Dollmaker*, where the young Cassie Marie speaks with an imaginary companion inspiriting her wooden doll. Ultimately the child is killed by the expectations of maturity and its accompanying rationality. Hiding with her doll on the train tracks, she is violently run over by an approaching train.

aspect that is visibly infused into the male conquering/hunting narrative of the novel, and some of Nunn's human-animal interactions.

While it might be somewhat bold to trace Donovan's idea of 'psychic communication' back to *Hunter's Horn's* narrative, it nonetheless becomes evident how both woman and animal exchange a form of mutual understanding under the yoke of joint oppression or cultural inferiority. As introduced in chapter two, women like Milly operate from an interstitial position, and the flux between communities, created mainly, as we saw, by the augmented bounds of an (un)conventional home sphere or family/kinship concept, allows for a greater relational dynamic. However, what I left unexplored, is how intermediary positions speak volumes of the instability of boundaries, which, according to thinkers such as Lönngren, Barad, Haraway ("Naturecultures"), or Butler ("Performative Acts"), pertain to the experience/performance of inter-subjective affinities.[128] Notice that when Milly exclaims "he's a sayen it's better'n eggs" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 10), referring to Zing's food preferences, she seems to engage in a form of communication that demands her to forsake, even if fleetingly, her own human boundary, and understand purely what "*he'*s a sayen" (idem). As Walters has shown, intersubjective affinity forms nurture-kinship bounds that are mutually fruitful, and which, in the end, also prove supportive to women. Should Milly go without the company of her animals, the character would, unquestionably, fall prey to the deteriorating isolation that assails so many women in her community. In truth, after a particularly enduring chase, Milly laments: "it's been so lonesome thout no hound atall" (96). It is for the return of the animal she most tellingly roots, for "she would (…) know they [animals] understood how things were with her better than any of her *human family*" (226, my italics). Hence, I argue that Milly strives for an authentic form of communication and a reciprocated understanding, not hindered by the social forms of curtailment she suffers and, at times, also seems to set forth.

Following that line of thought, *Hunter's Horn* incorporates myriad manifestations of what McHugh has called "cross-species companionship" (3) that bloom into inter-species forms of communication. Often, for instance, Zing "laughed with the children" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 41), while other times, certain of being unobserved in sweet secrecy, Milly converses freely with her animals, on a range of topics both intimate and nondescript. 'Conversation' is, however,

[128]What I call here "intersubjective affinities", runs parallel to Sandinal's notion of "performative affinity", a hybrid concept that the author draws from Judith Butler's famous theory of gender performativity, as well as from Haraway's study on the forms of affinity that result from interspecies companionship. Indeed, as explored by Butler, performativity points to a subversive repetition as a mode of questioning conventional practices of identity boundaries.

not always restricted to verbal means: in her renowned work *When Species Meet*, Haraway speaks of an "embodied communication", which should be received "more like a dance than a word" ("Species" 26)—a form of corporeal performance or articulation that is mostly nonverbal. In fact, Milly and her son Lee Roy are only capable of catering to their animals' individual needs by means of 'detaching' the animal from an arrogant/material illusion of love, and by fully entering, so to speak, into this 'dance' of bodily, intersubjective expression. When Zing returns from a tiresome and fruitless night of hunting, Lee Roy assures him affectionately, and eases the dog's apparent sense of guilt— "don't feel bad Zing. It looks like King Devil wuz made to be chased—never caught" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 33)—and further urges his mother to 'nurture' his closest companion.

Truthfully, intersubjectivity requires that "each subject feels the other as a like subject with a distinct, separate centre of feeling" (Benjamin 1), a definition which becomes equally valid, when extended to the nonhuman. On the literary plane, as we saw, this form of mutual respect, functions only when all narrative subjects are granted proper agenthood. When Milly is pregnant for instance, the pups follow her everywhere, even though they "never leap on her" as they persistently do on others (Arnow, *Hunter's* 226). This decision not only imparts an attentive agency on part of the animals, it also illuminates a bond of mutual understanding/respect that flourishes between different beings. Moreover, on another occasion, both Suse and Lee Roy envision their favourite hound as a 'distinct nucleus' of feeling and value, and soothingly caution him: "you allus watch out, Zing. Look at what happened to pore little Del tonight" (33). Del, a neighbour's inexperienced pup, had died in the chase that very evening, his body given up to a patriarchal 'whim'. Milly's prescient warning, shrugged off by the hunters as maudlin and naïve, stands but a feeble chance against the ruling paradigm of masculinist instrumentalism. While it must be recognized that Nunn expressly adverts his neighbour not to let his pup run, this approach is, again, not entirely altruistic, for Del would eventually grow into a "rare, good [hunting] hound" (27); one may argue that Nunn's affection springs, hence, from a utilitarian motivation. In fact, the degree of ownership that an instrumental approach may call forth becomes progressively clearer as Nunn's obsession intensifies. Unable to reason clearly or handle the sheer weight of emotion, Nunn violently

threatens his wife and children: "you could ruin em [the dogs]; and I'd ruin you" (97) he bursts.[129]

In that sense, Zing's death underlines this sense of utilitarianism or possession. While Milly and the children, amidst tearing grief, organize a funerary ceremony, and burry their dog among other departed family members, Nunn bemoans his loss, partly because "he was the best foxhound" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 42) ever known in the near vicinity. Of course, I would portray this character rather poorly had I also not underlined the complex emotional knot of affliction, guilt, and mourning that haunts him for many days onwards. Hounds are, in fact, as Eckley suggests, the principal instrument in this 'vicarious' mode of hunting, yet Zing was also a companion and brother ("Vision" 7). While Milly can recognize that the hound's death broke her like "losing (…) a long piece out of her life" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 50), Nunn expresses his own anger and bereavement both by taking part in an aggressively drunken row with Hans Cramer, and by giving in to villainous anthropomorphising of his mortal enemy, King Devil. Whereas it is undeniable that Milly, Lee Roy, or Suse succeed in envisioning Zing as an independent 'centre of value and needs' far more thoroughly—both Suse and Lee Roy bitterly blame their father for selfishly having pushed Zing too far—it is interesting to note here how a sense of shared loss is expressed by the characters in very different yet unavoidably gendered ways.

Additionally, I want to return here to Milly's encounter with King Devil. This union is, as Donovan ("Animal Rights") and Walters have both described, one of the novel's most powerful and significant human-animal intersections, owed to the spiritual as well as ontological meaning it gifts to Milly herself (Walters 79). Its significance underscores a recurring motif, where the human, and generally female agent empathically understands the sufferings of a certain animal, that is, akin to her own feelings of restriction, subscribed to the patriarchal complex. In Arnow's short story "Love?" for instance, the protagonist, a woman rebelling against her domineering husband and God, as to safeguard the life of a wild and impressive hawk, strongly resembles Milly's own quest for protecting King Devil's life. Indeed, Milly expressly withholds from Nunn the number of chicken casualties, as to both save the animal's

[129] Instrumentalism can be traced to what ecofeminist and other social thinkers have called a separate construal of self, one of the major structural ideals of Western civilization. Indeed, it is believed that "the normative imperative of this culture is to become independent from others and to discover and express one's unique attributes" (Markus and Kitayaba 226). See further chapter one, or else Cuomo (*Ecological Communities*). From the novel's perspective, I argue that Nunn's relationship with nature or nonhuman individuals is often obfuscated precisely because of this sense of separateness and detachment, brought about, as I have persistently argued, by the obsession of killing King Devil.

life and her husband's temper. Yet to understand Milly's encounter with King Devil more fully, it is crucial to allude to the animal's final surrender. The moment it is discovered, against Nunn's colossal discontent, that King Devil is, in fact, Queen Devil—a pregnant vixen—Milly's identification with the animal strengthens tangibly, as I will underline in the conclusion of my dissertation. Interestingly, and in hindsight, the sex of the animal is never, by any character, truly ascertained; it is, in the throes of the 'hunting narrative' deduced simply as to warrant Nunn's quest: a female animal does not measure up to the pursuer's bravura. The chosen victim must, in that sense, justify the risk and energy taken or, as stated before, a "worthy kill" enhances the final status of mastery (Emel 724).

What is more, as Holtman has argued, 'Queen Devil' first fully presents herself to the reader in her encounter with Milly (23), one of the few textual instances where the animal's identity is not lost to the panicky speed of a chased object. While 'goaded', so to speak, into the 'hunting game' King Devil is offered the potentiality of 'becoming herself' belatedly, a critical strategy which, as explored in my conclusion, becomes extremely suggestive of local women's many impediments. On the other hand, the fleeting yet close engagement with the animal brings to Milly imagined possibilities of "alterity" (idem), a potential break from the social system that endangers them both. While endemic to a wild geography, Milly, as well as her daughter Suse, point to the enigmatic yet deeply ambiguous freedom of the vixen. Astounding as it seems, something on this earth "could run light footed and free" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 226), a stark counter-image to that of Milly's own often obstructed and swollen embodiment in late pregnancy— "her puffed feet and hands, and the bigness of her body hinder[ing] her in all things" (idem)—or Suse's fate of disownment. Holtman goes further, suggesting that King Devil and the adversity or deterritorialization of its sex contains "a symbol for imaginative, gender, and sexual freedom" (24). While King Devil does, in fact, 'run wild' both Milly and Suse mistake the 'running from', for a liberational and deeply personal form of 'running towards'.

Moreover, as Scholtmeijer has made explicit in "Animal Victims and Human Sexuality", American literature has often re-worked the motif that can be found here: while hunting men, struggling with notions of virility and masculinity, insist on a specific animal's downfall, women, conversely, bring the same being compassionately under their wing, as a form of life-saving protection. Supported by Weston and Holtman, I argue that such a discrepancy takes on a deeper meaning in *Hunter's Horn*, as the bodies of women and some of animals signal hunted and oppressed sites. As Holtman remarks, there is a patriarchal complex "literally destroying

female bodies" (24) to which I would add nonhuman bodies as well. As I argue again below, maternity is for King Devil moulded into a drastic weakness, 'a hindrance' that eventuates her ultimate defeat. While the vixen may be said to inspire Suse or Milly with a possibility for individual transgression—the movement of "running (…) free" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 226)[130]—they both remain, in addition to Lureenie Cramer who dies in childbirth, unfortunately entrapped, as adverted in chapter one, not by the biological condition of their being female, but by the local and contextually negative significance such a condition earns.

Hence, apart from the relational array of values offered to nonhuman nature, an essential aspect of this woman-animal affinity is what Lynn and several others have called "boundary transgressions" (285). These movements of transgression often entail the courageous act of moving into the domain of the default, devalued or, as Mary Douglas would affirm, the socially despoiled/defiled.[131] These cultural and social boundaries that need 'trespassing' demarcate the heavy layered meaning that the concept of 'nature' or 'natural' has earned throughout history, as much as the ways it has mangled and reduced the significance of the female body. This exercise is indeed made easier for Milly as she is familiarized with subjugating forces as well.

Furthermore, a patriarchal complex requires boundaries be not overstepped, provided those boundaries define and maintain the superior status and privileges of the 'ruling group'. Indeed, in Frye's words, "such [patriarchal] systems could not exist were not the groups, the categories of persons, well defined" and accordingly pigeonholed (33). Nevertheless, as Butler (*Gender Trouble*) or Peterson maintain, strictly regulated boundaries become "contingent practices" or acts of re-enactment of those same boundaries (Peterson, 183) which, consisting of "social constructions, can be deconstructed, disrupted, and transgressed" (idem).[132] In fact, in chapter two, I pointed to the transgressive edge of a certain gender shift recorded in settlement circumstances, owed in great part to the allure and demand of the rugged hills. Here, I demonstrate how Arnow offers a potential discourse of female liberation, as Milly, Suse, or Sue Annie seem eager to cross into a terrain that is not in any way determined by oppressive

[130] Recall the conclusion paragraphs of my previous chapter, where Milly's encounter with King Devil is described more fully.
[131] See *Purity and Danger*, specifically the introduction, pp. 1-7.
[132] In another context, anthropologist Mary Douglas has pointed to an identical mechanism. She indeed maintains that the body is the bearer of a cultural discourse: "ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherent untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, that a semblance of order is created" (4). Kristeva further picks up the corporeal ambiguity between "within and without", to create her famous concept of 'the abject', pointing similarly to the overall vulnerability of boundaries and marginal territories.

values or corroded by the everyday laws of the 'natural'. Indeed "not even God or the neighbours'" judgement (Arnow, *Hunter's* 31) can define the purity of an encounter with a nonhuman other. This somewhat rebellious aspect is highlighted when emotional or affective contact with a being that is religiously sentenced as soulless is locally chastised; and yet, as we saw, it is with her 'animal family' that Milly experiences deepest understanding and compassion, and with whom she can shed her own 'patriarchal skin', entirely.

Another concept worthy of mentioning at this point is feminist physicist Barad's notion of "intra-action" (803), a form of performativity or practice that intersperses often distinguished categories in Western discourses or representation: "humans and nonhumans, culture and nature" (Barad 817) and other dualistic constructions mentioned in chapter one. According to Barad, systems, whether ecological or social, are always highly relational, and are, hence, deeply enfolded within the other. Reality is, in that sense, the result of infinitesimal co-agency, an unceasing "performance", as Dillard suggests (99). While interaction admits pre-existent (Cartesian) cuts, the neologism Barad coins points to the fact that "boundaries do not sit still" (817) and problematizes the idea of atomization or alienation between beings. In this context of enchained intra-action/being, what Hogan, Metzger, and Peterson call "the Gaya-hypothesis" (xii), or what I have personally found in the writings of some Native American authors for instance, is the delicate attempt of coming closer to the other's way of being, the other's true authenticity.[133] I argue here that Milly engages in this form of care-giving and solidarity not only envisioning the ultimate good of the other, for she likewise engages in the transgressive performance of these conventionally delimited categories—human-animal—as a form of personal liberation, and self-healing. Indeed, using Barad's work as springboard, Stacey Alaimo has theorized on the concept of "trans-corporeality" (2), a practice that espouses "interchanges and interconnections between various bodily natures" (idem), as a means of occasional evasion, subversion, or transformation. In truth, in Little Smokey creek "it was a sin to think on a hound like a human" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 68), and yet this is one of the sole religious and patriarchal imperatives that Milly wilfully opposes.

In the novel, such desire of contact with other forms of embodiment, lose from the woman-vixen encounter, become apparent when, bearing the pressing difficulties of pregnancy and on the threshold of giving birth, Milly is suddenly "eager for the outdoors; she wanted to see

[133] Apart from Zitkala-Sa, Torrance and Harjo and Bird's anthologies include numerous such examples of this specific inclination towards another. I want to underline here that the attempt described above, of coming closer to the other's authenticity, must be pursued without intentions of overmastering or conquering.

Maude and the ewes and all the things on the place" and, body to body, touch them physically (Arnow *Hunter's* 232). This surging need encapsulates a coveted transcending experience, a respite from her own (bodily) reality, from the strained significance that her own 'body-vessel' takes in her cultural network. The passage records the character's will to shift from serene observer, outsider, to that of participant, enveloped by the wildness of life around her. The animal, and nature in general, can, as if transport her into a deeper layer, one that cuts through the thick crust of socio-cultural boundaries, tenets, or beliefs. One can argue that, with different intensities, both Milly and Suse endeavour "to cleave what is natural from what is 'human induced'" and socially disguised as natural (Iovino 38). On the other hand, Milly visibly esteems the presence of those beings that she, herself, has many times supported, many of which have been similarly forced to lend their own embodiments to a discourse of reproductive management—Miss Betsey, for instance. The ritualistic, deeply female powers of communion and self-assertion that occasions of childbirth arouse (Chambers 27), seem here, again, extended to, or rather, as seeping into the nonhuman domain. While, as I mentioned above, Milly's 'practice' of transgression can never attain its full realization—the character remains, herself, too much allied to patriarchal social beliefs—it is her daughter Suse who takes this discourse or opportunity of personal liberation further, seeking transcendental experience in a wild, dehumanized spatiality.

Additionally, what is giving care, if not a form of loving attention that is directed, in greatest part, at another? Must Milly not disregard and disrupt, even if fleetingly, her own 'limiting' human experience, and let herself flow into the territory of (unknown) non-human nature?[134] On the other hand, bearing in mind my second chapter, the reader may not forget that this form of transgression, or trans-corporeal experience, is an extension of the overarching woman-land allegiance, so well brought to life in Appalachian literature. Considering Milly's relationships with her domesticated hounds, cows, chickens, or indeed with the wild King Devil, I return here to Hogan's inspiring words, namely that "intimacy and relationship with other animals has become one of the places we [some indigenous or rural women] inhabit, like land, home, air, or water" (xiv). This notion of place reminds me of Murphy's above integrated vision: a tapestry of darting and relational energy. For instance, when Milly affirms that "valleys were nice and hills and ridge tops were wild and windy places, but everybody ought to climb up to one once in a while—it was good somehow" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 234), she speaks, perhaps

[134] Indeed, looking into the eyes of her dog, Ztikala-Sa´s semi-autobiographical character questions how near one can learn to get to the ways of another being, without becoming intrusive or destructive (123).

unwittingly, of a liberational impulse that is associated to the idea of wildness and that remains to be harvested from the physical, corporeal bonds one learns to share with it.

Hence, as I have expounded so far, animals gain a form of characterhood in Arnow's text that demands readers to change their pre-ordained concepts of relationality, sociability, and, ultimately, earth community. On the other hand, I have begun to demonstrate how vocalized animals can participate in forms of communication that do not transpire exploitative and instrumental intentions. Indeed, this form of "communication between humans and animals is facilitated because they share similar mental capabilities and perceptions" (Kulick 364) or so Milly wholeheartedly believes. While the reader might inevitably signal anthropomorphic projection here, we must remind ourselves that, for women like Milly, these remain the solid principles that bestow greater equality onto beings different from herself—a panoply of shared capacities and perception. Indeed, this is not to say that Milly's character teeters close to irrationality—that would portent the patriarchally diminutive mechanism I am attempting to upend here—it elucidates, rather, how Milly does not envisage hyper-rationality as the trait that makes us a superior species. Torrance acknowledges a historically pertinent woman-animal allegiance for the chief reason that women's sense of 'humanness' or rationality did usually not disdain others as "dumbbells and fools" (4).

Before delving into the second part of this chapter, however, I want to briefly turn my attention to Nunn's character and see in what measure his interactions with animals may coincide or differ from Milly's, if he can properly 'understand' their articulations, and if I can, in fact, speak of a male character seeking for transgressive potential in the nonhuman world as well. Bossie Jean, one of Nunn's few textually individualized sheep, reproduces a type of knowledge that lies beyond the scope of anthropocentric/verbal articulation (Haraway, "Naturecultures"). Indeed, as Lönngren contends, "non-human agents can carry knowledge not shared by the human character in the novel (nor, sometimes, by the chronicle narrator)" (119). Bossie Jean has the habit of "slipping away at lambing time" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 107) taking refuge in a ruinous dwelling on the slope of the Pilot Rock Mountain. Although worrisome and tender, Nunn recognizes he does not dispose of the sensitive agility Aunt Marthie Jane possessed, the "wonderful hand with animals" (108). When during one of these episodes he finds her at last, Bossie Jean appears restless: "she came and sniffed his hand and blatted as if there was something she would say" (109), something Nunn does not entirely capture. Happy in his oblivion of fox-hunting trouble, he remains awe-struck: "the wonder of life (…) came over him like some grand all-pervading wave of water or wind or sound that for an instant, blots out

all the things but the man himself" (110). Indeed, when after long hesitancy, Bossie Jean drops her lamb, Nunn attentively nurtures and fondles the new-born animal, exhibiting a care-sensitive approach similar to Milly and Suse's, in a context/situation that is culturally ascribed to femininity. And yet, Nunn does not seem to fully understand what the other has to say,[135] for he appears to fall prey to a feeling of "puzzled disappointment" (idem) and detachment as soon as his ewe does not bear the expected twins.[136]

Furthermore, the morning after, Nunn meets a Bossie Jean with "sorrowful puzzled eyes" (111), and realizes she is destitute of her new-born lamb. The moment Nunn understands his mistake, of having left both vulnerable animals unattended in the wild, he resorts to something "he almost never did to any of his animals—hit her with a heavy hunk of brush" (idem), a behavioural trope that I have stressed above: an excess of feeling is translated into detachment and a violent approach. In fact, there seems to be a form of sudden 'separatism' here that obstructs the feelings of relationality or the practice of transgressive care that Nunn begins to experience. The seeds of love and profound admiration he allowed himself to feel at the birth of a new being, seem now engulfed by the detached and instrumental facet of self which, as Hogan, Metzger, and Peterson have underlined, envisages animals as "having no soul, no capacity for pain, emotion, intelligence, or worth" (xii). In the ensuing excerpt Nunn mentally recreates Bossie Jean's lost message. Her reluctance to give birth and disinterestedness in her own lamb should have induced Nunn to take them safely home with him:

> He understood it all now—her blatting for a lamb last night before a lamb was born, the one lamb only, the poor shelter she had chosen, the slow birth. Somewhere in a good warm shelter she had borne her first lamb; King Devil had stolen that; he had maybe shown himself to her—for he was never one to hide himself—and scare her into the birthing of the second; she had run away to the first rock house she found; he had followed her there and stolen the second. (111)

[135] Braidotti has demonstrated how "identities that are culturally and socially 'othered', "have always produced discourses of their own and voiced their increasingly invisible subjectivities", even if believed otherwise by ruling entities or institutions ("metamorphoses", 118). Additionally, this incomprehensibility of 'animal knowledges' could further be incorporated into what Foucault theorizes as a long train of "subjugated knowledges", those "that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity" (7).
[136] Frye contends that the expectation/treatment of the animal purely as a 'breeding machine' corresponds to "species superiority" (44), an aspect I consider in more depth below, as it does not differ from the arrogant cultural expectation placed on women's bodies.

In that sense, Nunn's character is often portrayed as wavering between a bond of kinship with his animals and a form of self-directed instrumentalism. The inevitable clash or conflict of these responses may translate, as we saw, in violent or aggressive expression. Thus, a fully intersubjective experience between self and other remains obstructed by a form of detachment that is mostly brought about by the compulsive chasing, anthropomorphising, and vilification of King Devil. When angrily returning home, Nunn imagines a conniving King Devil "on a back hill [where] he sat and laughed and planned things for them [his pups] as he had planned for Zing" or his two new-born lambs (idem). Whereas I explore this breach of 'self-other' detachment below, I want to conclude this section with one of Nunn's most significant human-nonhuman encounters, and underline how, in the end, the author envisions a vulnerable and constricted male character seeking for transgressive experience as well.

Let me return here to the idea of a strong Appalachian power complex introduced in chapter two: a sort of local-global dynamic in which all of Arnow's characters are, in some degree or other, viciously caught. This is a particularly challenging forcefield for Nunn, since it relegates him to the place of 'forfeited supremacy', offering the reader a broader contextualization of the character's own dominant traits and impulses. On the other hand, the excerpt I am about to describe is significant in that it illustrates the thoroughly non-essentialist or non-biological nature of care-ethics. Contrary to what one might imagine, Nunn is never overly enthusiastic about partaking in the "intricate networks of economic, cultural and material relations" of the global world (Vollp 222). In fact, the character becomes anxiously aware of his own backgrounded status, when met with the classist determinants that emanate from a larger plane of macro-culture. As Saugeres has recalled, rural masculinities also harden "in relation to, and opposition to other farmers" (376). Arriving at the town's market, Nunn seems "nervous and ashamed to be coming among all the rich farmers in fine big trucks and the trucks full of fine big cattle" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 78-79). I must underline that Nunn's meagre success as a farmer is, indeed, projected onto King Devil, either by himself or by his community.

Seeking refuge from the vaunting farmers, inasmuch as from his own welling feelings of desolation, Nunn partakes in a form of dialogical exchange with a mule who seems painfully unfamiliar with the confinement of the stable. Much like Nunn himself—and all other of Arnow's characters for that matter—the animal is described as struggling against enforced conditions: "it would give way and stand in the centre of the pen, then scream and bray and cry with a rolling of its eyes and pawing of the earth" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 85). Witnessing the animal's outrage, Nunn displays a dialogical and relational form of engagement, bringing the

mule to a state of calm, as it "sniffed his hand, shyly" (idem). Also, as a way of introducing the ensuing section, I am reminded of Freire's thought, and suggest that Nunn's illuminating action can be said to embody "an act of love opposing the lovelessness which lies at the heart of the oppressor's violence" or ideology (45).

In fact, Nunn, who otherwise relegates 'his household' to a backgrounded position, faces the dizzying prospect that "there might be other perspectives from which he is background" (Plumwood, *Feminism* 48). In that sense, 'mountain masculinities' should be regarded not solely as 'products' hardening from a local and harsh patriarchal legacy, for men's gravitation towards macrostructures of power and centres of capital seem of equal import here. Interestingly, vis-à-vis oppression, Nunn appears to seek for friendship and allegiance in nonhuman otherness as well, a response identical to Milly's.[137] Should the reader question whether this line of reasoning would not entail that women become, rather than allies and nurturers, animal's enemies and worst oppressors as well, I want to emphasize that, as Donovan ("Animal Rights") has argued, it seems to be the conscious purpose of a number of authors, from the earliest of American women regionalists to the science fiction of Le Guin and others, to carve this human-animal connection from a standpoint of mutual liberation, not further repression. Moreover, if women or men seek the kinship of other animals as a way of tasting the freedom and possibility that lies on the outer borders of an anthropocentric, potentially androcentric world view/culture, it seems more than valid to me that, along the process, animals be not further alienized from awakened and performed compassion.

Following that line of thought, care as transgressive performance is represented not necessarily "of the nature of the relators or parties of those relationships" (King, "Caring" 84), it springs from the nature of relationality and context itself. Many of Nunn's human-animal encounters relate indeed to a mode of being that I described earlier as: "the self as a closed system only accidentally involved in relationships with others" (Plumwood, *Feminism* 153). Yet, as elucidated above, it is in the breaches of this 'closed system' that we face a male character who seems to be seeking for liberational potential as well. Furthermore, when returning to the haven of community, Nunn savours the security of his own regained position: "it was good to be home in his own country. Just to think over all the places he had been and the people he had seen and the people he had had to talk to made his head swim" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 90). Paradoxically, his

[137] Arnow's short story "Marigolds and Mules" works around the same motif, the de-essentialization of care-values. The author crafts a young male character whose remarkable relational approach to life could begin to draw the lines of an ecologically mindful masculinity, hence bound to be a case-study for what Gaard ("EcoMasculinities") considers an emergent field of eco-masculinity studies.

compulsion, the taproot of his own, and of his family's endangered flourishing, is a welcoming distraction that intensifies in the wake of his return. While hunting remains an extremely public engagement, one, even, of social entertainment, Nunn alone inhabits the mental cavities of his will; Nunn alone knows the dimension of power he *needs* to bestow upon this menacing nonhuman other, and the hunt becomes, in that sense, a highly individualized and 'cut-off project'. It is, hence, of great significance that both the vehemence of the hunting impulse, and the oppression experienced by his family should stiffen in the wake of his involvement with broader and ambiguous power relationships.

The Woman-Animal Interconnection: Repression

In a glimpse of lucidity, Nunn envisions his wife and every community woman as a beacon of raying hope, a nucleus of warmth and comfort. After a particularly tiresome fox hunt, Nunn hurries back to "Milly's light" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 93), feeling a gnawing pity for those who have nothing but dark windows to return to. Indeed, as I have stressed thus far, Arnow's characters do bring forward a mode of interaction that ecofeminists believe challenges the dualistic thinking and hierarchical mechanisms that segregate us so radically from the land and our earth companions. Weston speaks in that sense of "female systems of solidarity and support" (2) as one of the most illuminating and didactic aspects of *Hunter's Horn*. Yet, while women's endeavours may kindle a light to return back to, and, as argued in chapter two, their domestic readiness may encapsulate an expression of female sublimation and heroism, Arnow is also keen on demonstrating how often women lack the potential of individual choice and any form of local and celebratory recognition, or how they remain left to the solitude of waiting for those who often do not return, husbands or sons. While the reader is incrementally led to form a critically different view, from an intra-narrative perspective, it remains apparent, however, how "it does not matter that women are often the first awake and the last to bed at night. It does not matter that they do both housework and fieldwork, all while birthing and raising children. Society deems women inferior workers" (Chambers 59).

In the passage alluded to above, describing the celebration of oncoming spring, women and children, inasmuch as domesticated animals, remain subsumed and backgrounded to "Nunn's household" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 156), a paternal undertone that rings with a sense of ownership, extended from the land or property to its motley dwellers and inhabitants. In that sense, Milly's ethically all-encompassing and care-sensitive disposition may remain, in the eyes of Nunn, dull or insignificant under its expected "naturalness". As Judith Butler's argues, specific forms of relationship or gendered "laws require conformity to its own notion of nature" (*Gender trouble*

135). It signifies little but the unfolding of 'nature's law' that women should nurture and protect, much in the same degree that the emotive and expressive capacity of men remains mostly smothered by cultural repression (Hogan, Metzger, and Peterson, xii). The idea that Milly's, or indeed farm animals' tasks remain a mere compliance with their 'natural' attributed functions facilitates the local institutionalization of a mechanism that both Frye and Plumwood (*Feminism*) have called dominative backgrounding. Indeed, as I expound in this section, nothing illustrates the depth or hard-rootedness of this cultural idea of 'naturalness' more than Milly's own unfaltering alliance with patriarchal mechanisms of oppression. The fact that I choose to read Milly's domestic pursuit as bearing subversive elements of individual sublimation or liberation should not avert us from searching which constricting force(s) or ingrained conceptual beliefs the character needs 'extraction from'. I also wish to recall that a human- or woman-animal embrace, one which, as we saw, contains germinative possibility, must be regarded in a non-essentialist, and thus contextual, geo-cultural light. By tracing the local fundaments that naturalize women and feminize nature, I aim to explore that context, while I equally forward solid examples of the 'oppressive backgrounding' that assail mountain women and animals alike.

Furthermore, in the novel, apart from companionship, nourishment, and protection, animals are often esteemed either as labour force or sources of capital. Thus, the narrative encompasses also a very distinct vein of ethics that does, at times, not respect the "intrinsic value of animals" (Lynn 284). From a patriarchal narrative standpoint, animals often become mere commodities, exchanged for the maximisation of individual capital. As we saw before, Nunn mercilessly sells off his family's livestock, as a mode of augmenting individual capital that remains, in the end, not always rightfully shared with his family. A brief examination of the patriarchal approach towards animals marks the first step in exploring the deeply negative and restrictive reasons that relegate or equate women to the domain of the wild, the nonhuman, the inferior animal. In truth, if animals are *a priori* deemed inferior, instrumental, incapable, or irrational, associating femininity to animal nature becomes, I argue, doubly harming to both animals and women. The four repressive markers that textually materialize this intersection or overlapping are the following: the dissociation of femininity from rationality, division of labour, biological procreative functions, and religious fundamentalism.

As I mentioned above, one may indeed not overlook the fact that, as head of the family, Nunn partakes more eminently in the forms of economic transaction that transform sources of produce into economic valuables or commodities, the so-called 'public realms' of

market/capital exchange. It is also worth noticing that contrary to what is normally claimed, these forms of economic exchange have for centuries played a crucial role in the survival of mountain families (Dunaway 12-13). In this sense, Nunn's approach to nonhuman others, a window that peers into this form of self, or way of being, must also be read as contextual and historical. Notice for instance the following excerpt, staging one of Milly's heifer cows, Lizzy, dolefully awaiting her decreed pecuniary value: "come on, boys, $3.35. Let me hear forty. Forty, do I hear forty? This is a pretty heifer to throw away for less'n $30. Her calf'll be worth more'n that come fall" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 89). The reader is brutally swept into a narrative current that opposes the reciprocal, and more domestic-oriented discourse of self-subsistence, and the intersubjective human-nonhuman approach explored above. On the other hand, instrumentalism is exacerbated as Nunn intends to sell "the heifer, the calf, and two remaining fattened pigs, and some ewes to raise 150 dollars to buy pups and dog feed" (77). The personal and potentially ecocidal hunger (the hunt) that motivates these actions worsens, in the eye of the reader, as the male protagonist's family silently endures increasing penury.

Unavoidably, the community's nerve system susurrates of his sinful ways: the "drinking, fox-hunting Nunn Ballew" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 244) is one of the sobriquets this character bears. Selfishness, a mounting debt, and the disregard of a hungry, ragged family remain close to unforgivable in a culture where solidarity and 'patriarchal providing' is a most commendable value. And yet, the reader cannot lose all sympathy for Nunn, since his lucidity and self-awareness testify to the character's remarkable complexity: having spent the family money on dog feed, he aggravatingly questions his ways: "the thing he did seemed yet more nightmarish and unreal, the act of a man gone crazy—taking food out of his children's mouths he was" (78). By honing Nunn with the powers of self-contemplation and criticism, Arnow is keen on questioning a patriarchal form of detachment and instrumentalism through the perspective of a male character. The reader is led to sympathise with Nunn because he begins to understand the liabilities of a patriarchal complex, even though failing, in the end, to deracinate its deeply ingrained traditionalism.

Interestingly, what seemed at first symptomatic of a rural construction/performance of heroic masculinity (Bates; Marie Bye; Little)—catching a marauding and intruding animal—has blindly overpowered Nunn's role of provider and, one could argue, his role as a man. The character's frustration gravely escalates, as he obsessively blames the animal for robbing him of his peace, happiness, and ultimately, of his sense of masculinity. In fact, as the narrator corroborates, Nunn increasingly "doubted his worth *as a man* and felt a failure in all things"

(Arnow, *Hunter's* 211 my italics). In that sense, the narrative explores how "hunting responds often to an act of blaming nature for one's own limitations", Collard and Contrucci corroborate (47). Paradoxically, Nunn's compulsive mental state, his "frenzy of feeling" (Collard and Contrucci 49) dangerously approximates him to the concept of inferior and unruly 'female nature' that he so zealously endeavours to surpass. This figure's de-humanization is underlined by a narrative mirror image, for Nunn's excessive vilification and anthropomorphising of King Devil is answered by his own loss of rationality and ultimately, there "[is] but one beast hunting another" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 267).

In addition, the widest difference between Milly and Nunn's encounters with a wild animal is that Milly does not require for the extinguishment of the other, in order to come into being, in order to be(come) herself. Nunn remains convinced that the initial template of heroic and public masculinity can be conquered and maintained through the expression of atomistic separation—the other (King Devil) must yield, perish, for the self to surface. In Mallory's own words, another form of life "is being negated, so that the subjective, independent male self can emerge" (77)—the identical logic we can retrieve from social backgrounding mechanisms. A masculinist perspective turns love and awe for another being into confront and persecution. As I argued above, Arnow strategically conveys only fleeting images of a running and quasi-characterless King Devil. If one studies the psychological/social motivation of the hunter, "the relationship with the animal becomes more important than the animal itself" (Kheel "Ecofeminism" 133).

Furthermore, Nunn often reprimands both Sam and Vinie for not behaving like "real hound[s]" (Arnow 1949 196), carrying gender implications that minutely reflect the novel's patriarchal context. While Sam is painted as persevering and courageous, Vinie is often referred to as "Nunn's blonde" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 196), her mission slightly tainted by the condition of being female.[138] When in the throes of a chase, Vinie abruptly goes back home (later it is discovered they were not even chasing a fox), Nunn flares up in anger "you—you—you jist don't a give a damn do ye? You—you bitch" (idem). Milly defends Vinie at all costs, arguing fiercely that she sure is a 'bitch' by nature— "God didn't mean fer her to be nothen else" (idem), intelligently deflecting the word's less friendly connotation. The party of listening men jeer in disrespect and attribute Milly's temper to her pregnancy: "she's allus like that when she's in th

[138] This is one of the consequences of the humanization process of nature: certain discourses, laws, or paradigms, as those of gender, are transposed or projected to the nonhuman world of nature, and the human interaction with those beings is further undergirded or motivated by those (cultural) precepts.

family way?" (idem)—exhibiting the same detrimental mechanism darted against a defenceless Vinie: the strategic use of femininity as a ploy for undervaluation. Throughout the remainder of the evening, however, cradling the pups in her lap, Milly sits "in the cool north door taking her after-supper chew of tobacco and combing her hair with the pups at her feet, luxuriating in the twilight coolness as they watched lightening bugs" (197). Once more, it is with nonhuman others that the character finds a soothing balm of company and expanding possibility.

Truthfully, masculinist instrumentalism can, at times, take appalling proportions in the text. As the gap between the construal of self and that of others widens exorbitantly, thoroughly eliminating a sensitive recognition of the other as distinct individual, more than one dog's life is wasted in the most gruesome and torturous of ways. In an ecofeminist framework, aggression is associated to a cultural reproduction of a masculine role, its expression being eased by an instrumental view of life. In Scholtmeijer's words, "many of the most pointed cruelties towards animals are authorized by asinine notions of virility" ("Animal Victims" 232). Over the years, much ecofeminist criticism has been targeted at systems/acts of "aggression motivated by male chauvinism" (Chang and Ralph 159), of which also hunting remains a most consistent example.[139] I am also recalled here of Cuomo's study on the fundaments of instrumentalism alluded to in chapter one. Should an animal remain construed solely by its extrinsic or use-value, it can, according to the 'valuer', never truly be harmed. While wrongdoing may, in practicality, soar beyond measure, it cannot be thus perceived by the self-oriented 'perpetrator', and property suffers, hence, very little injury (Beirne paraphrased in Gacek 325). Notice the following instance that Nunn recalls and fiercely criticizes. Conscious of a miscalculated manoeuvre, a neighbour's hound returns from the hunt, licking his 'master's' hand with a hesitant yet meekly apologising demeanour. Josh, 'his master', seems to entertain the dog at first, when suddenly, he malevolently kicks him, and "the hound's body was flying in a high arch towards the fire" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 273). In lack of a bullet shot, the dog torturously burns alive. In my view, what remains of most concern here, apart from the brutal and 'Cartesian de-sensibilization' of another being, is how quickly this scarring episode is forgotten, the hounds replenished, and the violence repeated.

Even though Nunn does not resort to these forms of heartless cruelty, he nonetheless often threatens to "throw [his hounds] in th' fire" for instance (Arnow, *Hunter's* 195). While this should not define Nunn's personality, it bespeaks, however, what I have been referring to as a

[139] See for instance Carol Adams' essay "Caring About Suffering, a Feminist Exploration", where she investigates our inter-species barriers as drawn, principally, by social and gender conventions.

"solitary, separate, isolated, [and] atomistic" (Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* 90) mode of construal/way of being, that is contextual—the heritage of a patriarchal local masculinity. Notice that as soon as "the hatred of the red fox and the long nights of hunting were gone" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 60), Nunn thrives amidst the welter of beauty and life around him, overflown by "a feeling of peace and joy in doing a long-needed bit of work" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 145). Most remarkably, though not mustering the means for its dissolution, Nunn is painfully conscious of this chasm, for indeed "the damned red fox had put a wall between him and the rest of the world (…) he chased a fox because he had to" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 92). Hence, as I intimated above, the complexity of the character blooms more fully in the breaches where this approach of detachment occasionally falters. Nunn's own close encounter with King Devil is, for that very reason, as significant as Milly's.

During one particularly exhausting night of hunting after Zing's death, Nunn is presented with the opportunity of shooting the animal, and 'ending' his troubles once and for all. Interestingly, he refuses to break 'the rules of the game', as Aldo Leopold would have it, and catch the vixen right away. Whereas I do not at all disregard the edifice of tradition and ritual—Nunn himself pledges the fox had to be caught "fair and true with a foxhound" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 56)[140]—Arnow elucidates the curious moments where this 'secured' form of self-detachment fails, giving way to a wave of intersubjective compassion. I return here to the vicarious aspect of traditional Appalachian fox hunting. As Eckley avers, "men who take part in it are not, strictly speaking, hunters at all" (*Harriette Arnow* 71), they meticulously train other beings to get the job done, so to speak. I believe that employing hounds to kill another being may indeed cover the fissure of hyper-separation that an act as cruel as extinguishing another's life, for whatever reason, actually requires.[141] This means that by "denying that the other [the fox-hound] is part of himself" (Mallory 78), by relegating the catching itself to another being, Nunn facilitates the occurrence of oppression and violence.

Thus, when directly confronted with the annihilation he must commit, Nunn is engulfed by two different sweeps of feeling. Notice he starts off cold and abrasive, boasting: "give me that

[140] Hunting with the aid of other animals, dogs or horses, is part of what Leopold calls the good code of sportsmanship. In "Goose Music" he goes as far as to maintain that "there was much truth in the old idea that any man ignorant of dogs or horses was not a gentleman" (172).

[141] This line of thought is corroborated by Emel, who, commenting on the violent trapping of wolves in the United States affirms that "the ability to admire what one has murdered requires curious detachment" (724). This process is easier and occurs far oftener than one imagines, however, for "if we are taught to believe or have 'rationalized' that an animal is 'vermin' and deserves to be killed, a feeling of sympathy can be suppressed or altogether replaced with hatred, rage, anger, or detachment" (708).

carbide and a rifle and I'll kill him [King Devil], spotlight an bust him right between the eyes, just as easy as killen a frog" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 45). Then, he paralyses in utter vulnerability. With the animal blinded and transfixed, languishing only a few paces from the hunting crew, Nunn is stung by the angst of a proving test: "killing King Devil would be a job for Nunnely Ballew alone" his companions whisper (Arnow, *Hunter's* 47). Quickly, the remembered brags dissipate, he is seen as nothing but a weakling, and "something like regret stirred the far corners of his mind" (idem). With the rifle in position, Nunn is fatally distracted and humbled by King Devi's intensely staring eyes. There is unmediated contact between man and animal, both beings momentarily lost in each other's vulnerability, unarmed, paradoxically, by the concrete fatalness of the gun itself. Against a riling choir of "shoot, Nunn, you fool, shoot" (idem), the character is spellbound by "the green fire of two eyes—big as a man's eyes they looked, and somehow like a man's eyes they were, too" (idem).[142] Notice the solidification of a narrative mirror image where separate beings are invited to come together: two visibly petrified, anxious, yet life-loving beings stare deeply into each other, possibly into themselves. The solid wall of alienation is here demolished: the "eyes didn't look the way he thought they would look" the narrator affirms (48), and thus Nunn fails to do the animal any harm.

Having expounded some of the different ways in which the realm of the animal can, from a patriarchal standpoint, often be downgraded in Appalachian culture, Arnow herself invites the reader to connect the different ends or possibilities of a woman-animal textual intersectionality. Indeed, the wavering aspect or complex ambivalence of Nunn's character is further made evident from a vantage point of social and familial relationships. If, on the one hand, he catapults his daughter angrily to the home sphere, with "his voice snarling and animal-like [seeming] to come from a part of him that lived past his will and his reason, the part that hunted King Devil" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 266-267), he is, nevertheless, one of the few characters who truly understands his daughter's dream of education. Interestingly, the need to express and take control over his family seems directly related to the need of overmastering a threatening nonhuman other—it stems, as indicated by Arnow herself, "from the same part" (idem). While both Suse and King Devil remain textually vulnerable identities, meeting, in the end, a fate of individual, yet socially normalized suffering, Nunn's angst and anger lives "past his will"

[142] I want to stress that neither Nunn nor the reader does at this point know that King Devil is in fact a vixen. I find it meaningful that a sort of empathic communication can flow between two beings, not only from different species, but from different gender categories as well. This aspect of gender indeterminacy, read of course in hindsight, deconstructs the idea of gender categories as distinguishing barrier between beings.

(idem), beyond, it seems, his personal volition. I proceed, hence, to explore the four principal mechanisms that assemble women and animals in a lower conceptual rank.

1. The Cultural Divide between Women and Rationality

The first mechanism at hand is the centuries-old unwillingness to accept femininity and rationality in the same equation. In Little Smokey Creek, rationality, the capacity of producing certain types of knowledge, belongs most often to men. As elucidated in chapter one, more than consciousness, memory, or instinct for instance, the capability to reason embodies or demarcates the ur-trait/definition of our 'anthropocentric supremacy'. On top of that, if we recall the dualistic macro-structure supporting our sense of reality, rationality is historically considered a male hallmark, often anathema to women and most certainly to animals (Plumwood, *Feminism*; Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy*; Mercahnt, *Death of*). As I further explored, the severance of femininity from rational input has hardened the identification of women with the unruly aspect of nature, problematizing the cultural definitions/views of both woman and animals, and thus facilitating exploitation and abuse. On another note, it is not lost on me that Milly's continuous exclusion from the social 'male arena', from the active participation in public discourse for instance, only further accentuates the local belief of 'female incapacity'. Unfortunately, the character herself remains most vehemently opposed to the possibility of female education.

Following that line of thought, an idea of linear development must render nature, as well as colonized forces of labour—women, among others—as homogenized sources of exploitation.[143] Hence, an obstinate disbelief in a particular type of reason, or in specific entities as holders of an emplaced knowledge (woman and nature), seems to me, also, one of the responsible factors behind the long train of subjugated and forcefully silenced sources of knowledge Foucault speaks of. In fact, in her *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*, Vandana Shiva illustrates how the richly situated and embedded forms of 'nature wisdom' shared between rural Indian women over the centuries, are disregarded as foolish, and wholly unsubstantiated by intruding capitalist corporations of land management—*they* "declare organic systems of knowledge irrational" (Shiva, *Staying Alive* 25), inasmuch as the key practitioners of such organic balance. Circling back to our Appalachian context, were I to place

[143] Mies and Shiva (*Ecofeminism*) both argue that the idea of human emancipation from nature, and the increasing dominance of its resources, has led to an over-glorification of the concepts of anthropocentric rationality (6). Whereas authors such as Plummwod (*Feminism*), or Shiva and Mies (*Ecofeminism*), do not altogether refute rationality, they question the dominance that the concept may entail and how it remains, historically, deeply ingrained within androcentric expressions of power.

the novel's characters on a continuum, the upper end would be populated by wealthy and resourceful male capitalist farmers or law/statesmen—the traditional holders of all reason—while the bottom end remains vacant to both women and animals. Nunn, a product of "cultural forces" (Weston 2), is placed somewhere in the middle, yet, in relation to Milly or the farm animals he remains the most direct and conspicuous oppressing entity. For Suse, however, it is her mother, Milly, who is placed on the dominative position immediately above her. This structural chain of oppressions corresponds entirely to what Thompson has argued as the complex and interfused "powerlessness" of the Appalachian people and region: the stigmatization of the geo-cultural region, in concert with a strong religious fundamentalism, translates into the myriad forms of oppression experienced intra-community wise (84-85).

In addition, as I explored in chapter two, Arnow's female characters exhibit a deeper degree of bioregional knowledge, that is, a sensible and sensitive tact with the boundaries and contextual specificities of their local and regional environment. I connect this aspect to a subsistence economy system, greatly preserved, as Shiva and Mies postulate, by rural women, often not implicated in larger market transactions (*Ecofeminism* 296). Nevertheless, Milly or Sue Annie's work, inasmuch as their discourse or feelings, are hardly ever acknowledged, and remain obfuscated against the palpable "intellectual superiority of men" (Figs 23). Let us consider Sue Annie, the community's often respected, often repudiated midwife, doctor and herbalist.[144] In the beginning of the novel, the narrator acknowledges that "even if she was a midwife (…) Nunn didn't think much of Sue Annie's cures", transforming, as history has recorded well enough, this particular form of female knowledge/practice into what he considers devious "witchcraftery" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 16), a supposition undoubtedly buttressed by her courageous unwillingness to follow God.[145] On the other hand, when Sam and Vinie are diagnosed with pneumonia (a condition suspected earlier at home by Milly and not given enough attention to), Nunn accepts Milly's knowledge, yet he can never seem to tell her that. Instances of such apparent lack of equilibrium between a masculine discourse seeking to assert

[144] Both Henderson and Strain forward excellent studies on the folkloristic medicine practices of the Appalachian Mountains.

[145] According to Merchant (*Death of*), this association of a female medicinal practice, or indeed childbearing activities with witchcraft is an old pattern. The critic comments on how "knowledge of nature and women's healing powers (…) were systematically obliterated in the witch hunts of the Renaissance" (172). In the Appalachian context, Chambers affirms that women "learned from the previous generation how to care for the [other] women in their community" (26). Forms of 'othered knowledge' that have, historically, cost many women' lives are those of plants and healing.

power, and a backgrounded yet narratively relevant feminine inasmuch as animal discourses—Bossie Jean's above-mentioned excerpt is a clear example of that—permeate the novel.

Two precocious conclusions seem to emerge here: first, aside from the scope of exhausting domestic labour, women are put on the Earth essentially for one central mission, childbirth and rearing activities. Welter maintains that "women were warned not to let their (…) intellectual pursuits take them away from God" or their 'natural' tasks (154). Any endeavour tempting to overrun this meticulously drawn area, was either culturally belittled or downright unaccepted. As we will see below, Suse is deterred from pursuing education, for it would menacingly open her path towards public opportunities. Second, as the traditionally uneven delegation of labour proves, woman is deemed closer to all the "dumb beasts" of the planet (Arnow, *Hunter's* 245), while man reaches closer to an image of God.[146] It is precisely from a place of awareness of this unfortunate 'mundane distribution' that Milly seems to align herself, whole-heartedly, with other subjugated and nonhuman beings. When she attests for instance, "me an th pups now, we'uns ain't no fools" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 207), she accentuates the power that lies in 'united otherness' (Scholtmeijer, "Otherness" 234) and cultivates a sense of knowledge and confidence that is not grasped by other community men. From the perspective of a ruling patriarchal complex, these exercises of germinative evasion are strategically warped as further evincing women's putative ignorance and gullibility.[147]

Curiously, even though I find transgressive or, as I have argued, 'trans-corporal' potential in Milly's anthrozoological relationships, in a social, familial, and human context, the character seems unable to distinguish her own patriarchal inclinations, unable to achieve this sense of 'united otherness'. Effectively, though the narrative critically highlights a repressive woman-animal connection, it would be reductive not to include female characters in its perpetuation. In that sense, Arnow develops the complex intricacies of oppression that we saw above with Nunn; from a standpoint of backgrounded homogenization, oppressed individuals or groups become unaware of individual necessities and thoroughly support the 'fictions' of 'natural laws' that lie at the root of their own 'powerlessness', contributing to the validation and

[146] In *Civilized Creatures*, Jennifer Mason demonstrates how a hierarchically different distribution of earthly beings approximates some more to the image of God than others (11). Lacking agency, nature was regarded as a tool of God's will, and a realm to be deciphered by man's intellect/curiosity. Later on, Baconian principles of modern science, where nature was regarded as female yet inert and empty, were put forth to justify an exploitative exercise of scientific discovery/development (Merchant, *Death of* 235).

[147] As Bernard Shaw famously observed in another context: "the white American relegates the black to the rank of shoe-shine boy, and then concludes that blacks are only good for shining shoes" (quoted in De Beauvoir 33).

institutionalization of their own subjugation.[148] Indeed, as we saw, when Suse meets her new female teacher, she is inspired with "things mysterious and unattained" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 198), fuelling a narrative-long dream of higher education and individual emancipation. Contrary to Sue Annie or Nunn's warmer welcoming however, Milly's dictum remains clear: they had absolutely no need for "a girl teacher" in Little Smokey Creek (190). On other occasions, when Suse ventures to opine or rebuke the words of her father, it is Milly who abrasively shouts, "shut up and git back to that work in th' kitchen where you belong (…) You're learnen so much frum books it'll be your ruination" (242). Milly herself cannot come to terms with the idea of female education, or with the 'menacing' association between rationality and the female 'naturally-ordained' role, as the transmission of a specific femininity or womanhood dictates, in the end, her own success as a woman and mother.

2. Labour Division

A second and strong marker of the cultural internalization of the woman-nature/animal connection is the strict division of labour, which even though consisting of a larger-spanning and complex cultural phenomenon,[149] is intensified in this geographical cadre, partly owed to "the intrusion of the world system into southern Appalachia" (Dunaway 18). Indeed, while Milly's 'natural' domain/role revolves around "household and home responsibilities" (Helton and Keller 151), Nunn is galvanized into participating in a more global form of economic production and transaction in the public realm. The expansion of a capitalist market ideology demonstrates indeed a tendency to stress "a greater class differentiation within local communities, as well as (…) a greater polarization and differentiation between men's and women's tasks", Mies argues ("Rural Women" 18). This means that the division of labour may intersect gendered as well as economic differentiation, while it actively, and economically, downgrades women and animal's labour. Other studies however, have traced the hierarchical rural labour distinction to an older frontier or yeoman agrarian ideology, where the mostly male pride taken in an independent and self-reliant mode of life did in fact depend on the subordination of women and animals (Osterud, 15). As Jane Harrison stresses, the American agrarian illusion rests on eclipsed forms of subservience and conquest. An existing chasm in labour distribution and the public value each domain assumes become associated with the

[148] From a Native perspective, Canadian writer and academic Emma LaRocque has stressed that it is, at times, harder to educate the oppressed than the oppressor, as they are mostly taught to be "afraid of self-inspection and change" (370).

[149] Furthermore, as I explore in the last section of this chapter, a fundamentalist religious practice helps to strengthen these divisions, for a literal interpretation of religious texts often forced women to remain silent and indoors, under the vigilant watch of the family's patriarch. See Leonard especially his chapter 12.

double-faced narrative explored in the previous chapter: it further cements a rigorous out/indoors or public/private dyad with its concurrent narratives of power.[150]

Considering the previous chapter, while there remains an evident line drawn between a woman and a man's field of work, history demonstrates how the agglomeration of circumstances hitherto presented required and fostered gendered interdependence and joint assistance. Yet, as presented in the novel, this form of boundary obfuscation/transgression is more easily taken up by women than men—Milly works arduously in the fields, or chops wood for instance—due to the general masculine repellence regarding role subversion (Welter, 1966). In the previous chapter I have argued that the land can aid women in gaining forms of strength other non-rural women could most possibly not achieve. Also, the interstitial position women often acquire, swivelling between communities, espouses a form of sympathy to transgressive performance that is not so readily associated to, or experienced by the novel's male characters. From a masculine standpoint, inversion may not only entail what is commonly known as emasculation, it also requires entering the domain of the non- or lesser privileged. Even though Milly recalls "he [Nunn] would stay home and cook dinner some fine spring Sunday" for instance (Arnow 1949 302), looking back, she smiles in melancholic disbelief. Besides, while Nunn only sporadically fulfils a task that is culturally ascribed to femininity, Milly, Lee Roy, and Suse relentlessly assume all of Nunn's tasks during his frequent bouts of absence.

Hence, the social enactment of a masculine role (Birkeland), and an active dissociation of the concept of masculinity from the gamut of values symbolically related to the domestic space, have contextually bound men to a number of particular activities related to the outdoors.[151] Following that line of thought, Bell has illustrated how rural men may develop a certain ease with tasks which may pertain to a more violent, separate, or instrumental mode of self—hunting, killing, or selling off animals comprise some such examples (paraphrased by Little 62), foregrounded in the novel. On the other hand, the privilege of earning full accessibility to a public realm granted the Appalachian male farmer access to what women and children often wishfully, often mistrustfully envisaged as "the rest of the United States, [or] the world" (Smith 6). The persistent unavailability of such paths to women not only precipitates an evident

[150] Groover, paraphrasing Douglas and Epstein's arguments, concurs that throughout the 19th century productive work was normally attributed to men, and was conducted "outside the household, in the public realm" or in the wild (Groover 25). With the cementing of a capitalistic ideology, productive work conducted outside of the home gained greater notability and respect than the work confiscated to the home-garden terrain.

[151] Values that are dissociated from the domestic realm are listed by Groover: heroism, competitiveness, individualism, conquest, physical strength, and public courage. It is noteworthy that they all infuse Nunn's endeavour to catch King Devil.

process of "female backgrounding" (Plumwood, *Feminism* 21), as opposed to male or "phallocentric foregrounding" (Frye 167), it equally hardens feelings of social abandonment and loneliness. Accessibility to a public realm is spurred in the novel by forms of capitalistic/market exchange, yet also by an increasing and ironically much denied dependency on commercialized products. More and more radios, specialized household items or technological gadgets, agricultural fertilizers, processed food, cars and trucks, etc. are hoarded into the mountains, the pastoral middle landscape falling slowly into obsolescence.[152] In any case, the same pattern gains form: Suse Ballew's craving for education and for the broader world is only partly satiated by the stories her fellow community men bring along. Never can she or Milly experience the chance of trading the private and isolated realm of the 'home-garden' for the shimmeringly distant promise of public potentiality.

Yet, in what ways does the division of labour, and its entailed private/public realm(s) reductively associate women with animals? Appalachian renowned scholar Cratis Williams seems to reinforce the derogation attached to 'women's work', and, most notoriously, the relegation of animals to this invisible arena of domesticity. In his own words: "there is nothing at which a mountain man or boy balks so positively as doing woman's work. To milk a cow or wash dishes or make a bed is a humiliation not to be borne" (35). To be sure, even until her most pressing stage of pregnancy, Milly continues to care for her farm animals and family. Nunn, who largely remains in this field of work a "non-producer" (Lingam and Paltasingh 46) is, at times, sensitive to Milly's condition and occasionally milks the cows. Yet, in one of her last stages of pregnancy, Milly is described as "slow in all her movements", her back severely hurt from "squatting to milk Betsey" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 226). As 'head' of the family, most of Nunn's interactions with animals display some instrumental interest that we can hardly find in Milly or Suse's approach.

In that sense, through the crystallization of a "male ideology of superiority" (Semaldi and Shakespeare 41), the division of conceptual realms of work according to gender difference, also further propitiates the distinctively instrumental approach to nonhuman nature that is being explored here. Situated either in the public space of economic transaction or fighting the contingent forces of the wild (King Devil), Nunn enacts a system of values based, as illustrated above, on separation and detachment. From that specific angle, Rosie, Bessie, Lizzie, Bossie Jean, among others, may become commodified. On the other hand, it is safe to affirm that, in

[152] At the root of this incremental need for consumption lies the paradox that Mahoney presents: technological advance is extolled to the point that it is believed to foster social development and harmony.

a context of agrarian production, while the welfare of livestock is ubiquitously regarded as "menial and secondary" (Saugeres 373), it seems to remain, therefore, mostly attributed to women. While this aspect supersedes Appalachian culture, it conceptually assembles women with animals in a space that is symbolically inferior, backgrounding both women and animals as eclipsed forces of labour.

Additionally, in the home sphere, Suse suffers harsher reprimand from her mother than from her father, whenever she is less inclined to take over the 'home front' operations. Patriarchal family values, while often doling out privilege to an elite of men are passively embraced by women, who have, like Milly, become 'immune' to its self-inflicting mechanisms. What we see happening between Milly and her daughter pertains to the institutionalized belief in 'natural laws' or roles. Any female 'initiative' that falls slightly out of the lines of the archetypal "Mother/Caretaker/Conserver/Helpmate" template is adamantly repulsed (Frye, 91)—education being such an example. Arnow obviates how decision making within the home sphere is zealously enjoyed by older women and, in turn, oppressively "used against younger women" (Lingam 13). Milly seems unable to compassionately understand the needs of her daughter and cannot exceed the natural given that "girls look after their houses and babies" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 248). Indeed, according to Milly, Suse must "get it into her head that she was through school and mighty nigh a woman now" (262). In that sense, in an environment fiercely defined by, or erected upon, a patriarchal dominant structure, further forms of subjugation propel more precipitously, with the valuable exception, as seen previously, of the 'woman-animal embrace'.

Curiously, Nunn, hyper-aware and battling with a sense of guilt, empathizes with his daughter: it was with "more and more hurt in his pride" (248) that he witnessed Suse's hardening disillusionment. Thus, he effectively 'invites' his daughter into a territory that embodies the key 'transgressive lines' of Arnow's novel—wilderness. Conversely, Milly restricts and shames her daughter for seeking appeasement or individual experience in an unruly spatiality that proved, as we saw in chapter two, beneficial to the expansion of her own gender and domestic role(s). Indeed, Milly's discursive relations harden, calling her daughter a "no-good whore" (262) and threatening to "whip her" (idem), for she seems to equate the trope of wilderness with the hackneyed conception of female and corporeal indecency, despoilment. Without getting ahead of myself here, I want to suggest that Milly's individual need to find transgressive experience 'outside' the boundaries of the purely human, seems to collide with her own daughter, whose needs are, in the end, very similar to her own.

3. Biological Reproductive Functions and Speech Patterns

The issue of sexual work division, and by extension the dualistic 'production/reproduction' rift (Ortner; De Beauvoir; Lingam and Paltasingh) flows yet into another aspect that ceaselessly assails mountain women, and which construes her, publicly, as belonging closer to the realm of animality and biological reproduction, a term that may operate on two levels. Lingam and Paltasingh's Marxist analysis discloses how production is conventionally accepted as encompassing remunerated work (47), while reproduction encompasses the non-remunerated purview of women— "the conversion of crops and wages into usable goods in the home" (46). In the economic sense of the word, 'reproduction' remains directly associated to a repercussion of certain domestic efforts and values (Lingam and Paltasingh 46), such as the preparing and canning of food, for instance.

One of the consequences that the widening discrepancy between productive and household reproductive labour effectuates is, as Lingam and Paltasingh insightfully aver, that:

> Those in the working class of the domestic mode of production are interpreted as 'dependents' and those in the leisure class as 'heads of households'. But it does not mean that household subordinates are really or normatively dependent on their household heads. In a sense, of course, the relations of dependency are actually the reverse, since leisure classes are always more dependent for their survival on the support of producing classes than vice versa (47).

In truth, in her narrative representation, Arnow is keen on upending this conventional dependency dynamic: ruling entities or household patriarchs are portrayed as thoroughly dependent upon their subordinates' labour, without their awareness or recognition. This conflict is textually well illustrated when, one late afternoon, Nunn realizes that his son Lee Roy is more invested in the work he is neglecting, and that his family, animals, and farm land seem to flourish well enough in the absence of his supervising eye. When Nunn returns home exhausted after a night out hunting, his family working hard in the fields, John Ballew, his cousin, affirms somewhat facetiously: "no need to come home; you can fox-hunt all through corn-planten" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 160), and it is with mounting self-disgust that Nunn acknowledges Lee Roy as "more and more the man of the house" (247).

In addition, this economic form of reproduction—strongly implying the devaluation of the non-original—is justified as 'naturally female' due to biological procreation and the social institution of maternity. In that sense, as both De Beauvoir or Ortner have postulated, the 'male

annexation' of productive opportunity, and its association to power/privilege discourses, may embody a primitive and patriarchal attempt at surpassing the gift and engagement of (species) reproduction. As De Beauvoir eloquently expounds:

> On the biological level a species is maintained only by creating itself anew; but this creation results only in repeating the same Life in more individuals. But man assures the repetition of Life while transcending Life through Existence; by this transcendence he creates values that deprive pure repetition of all value. (99)

While the notion of procreation is depreciatively correlated to passive repetitiveness, what De Beauvoir envisions as a female and higher 'enslavement' to the (human) species, Ortner argues that women have continuously been regarded as biologically closer to nature for their procreative abilities. A brief look at the world's oldest founding cosmologies renders multiple associations between female goddesses' embodiments and sexuality and the powers of natural germination (Torrance). A patriarchal order 'assures life', as De Beauvoir ventures, by means of 'transcending through existence', which entails both the backgrounding and sovereignty of women and animals' procreative forces. In that sense, procreation is exploited in an Appalachian context, being regulated by mechanisms of patriarchal control. Indeed, according to Kemmerer, "those who hold power (…) have a tendency to control and exploit female bodies—especially female reproductive biology—whether sow, cow, or hen" (69).[153] Below, in the section devoted to mountain religion, I return to the concept of patriarchal management of female reproduction; for now, I retrieve some of the novel's socio-linguistic instances that clearly relegate women to a realm of inferior nature/animality, under the curtailing assumptions of reproduction.

What becomes startlingly transparent here is the association of femininity to corporeality and, as Bujok, Merchant (*Death of*), or Gaard ("Living Interconnections") have made clear, the further linkage of all that is corporeal to inferior nature and animality—the Neo-Platonist principle of "*contemptus mundi*" (Torrance, xvi). Curiously, Arnow has, herself, written on the implications that tie women and animals together under the repressive cloak of biological reproduction. The unceasing "flood of babies" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 274) that women suffer is commented on by the author in her non-fictional *Flowering of the Cumberland*, where she

[153] As we saw above, Bossie Jean is met with aggression when she fails to deliver the expected litter. On the other hand, heifer cows are incentivized to bear calves for their marketable price.

envisages forms of female body-management as stemming from grim Calvinistic and literalist interpretations of the human and female condition. In her own words, she establishes a parallelism between women and animals' bodies, suggesting: "women, they [mountain men] might reason, were somewhat like mares; two covered by the same stallion, two days apart could drop foals on the same day or a week apart" (*Flowering* 60).

What is more, the novel is strewn with linguistic pejorative constructions that sustain this deeply engrained connection.[154] Indeed, as Arnow bluntly posits, women are socially construed as mares. In the novel, Nunn, among other community men, speaks of "a team a women like a team a mules" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 61), while, as I have stressed above, female dogs are admired for their looks— "my pretty bitch" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 272) is a phrase echoed throughout the narrative, and one which, while indicating masculine possession, accentuates, also, the linkage between corporeality, beauty standards, and femininity. On another occasion, Suse, endeavouring to come loose from Mark's clinging grip, expresses her dislike at feeling constricted. Somewhat taken aback, Mark, the father of her future baby, answers: "most horses, *especially mares*, learn to like their bridles" (61, my italics). The association is undisputable here: women, 'like mares', are expected not to flinch, and should obey a 'master's' command. This linguistic association is problematized as both woman and animal are *a priori* construed as devalued beings. A significant example of a woman-animal association that is non-reductive and non-hierarchical is conveyed by Sue Annie, who looks for meaning in a conceptual realm where neither woman nor animal is devalued. Sue Annie calls Milly a 'doe' because time and again, she overcomes the predicament of giving birth alone. Neither Milly nor the animal referred to are diminished in this case.

On the other hand, the lack of reason, or the general unruliness that defines nature, is often traced to the "uncontrollability" of women's bodies—a potential reason behind the fear of menstrual blood or female sexuality, for instance. Many times along the narrative the reader faces distasteful comments such as: "good God (…) you talk like a half-crazy woman in the family way" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 48). Given that unrelenting pregnancy is one of the capital ordeals women silently endure, deeming them 'half-crazy', mere semblances of the 'crazy fox' or 'half-crazy ewes', and employing pregnancy for negative comparison, remains problematic

[154] Men may have animal nicknames as well, yet they always refer to their own glorification and power endowment: when Suse calls Mark a "bear" or "wildcat" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 229), she does not mean it in a belittling or oppressive way. Warren (*Ecofeminist Philosophy*) includes a list of animals that are usually associated to power positions/behaviour and attributed mainly to men.

and insulting not only to femininity but to animals as well. In fact, suspecting Mark Cramer's intentions and wooing strategies, Nunn possessively warns his daughter: "don't' be gitten sparken an walken with th boys in yer head. You ain't a goen to do it" he affirms (207). In her study *Fathers and Daughters*, Sharpe argues that "fathers' concern to preserve their daughters' innocence and the fear of losing them to other men reflects sexual jealousy and possessiveness" (86). However, as stated above, given the cultural 'terror of sexuality' and its religiously attributed status of defilement, Nunn inasmuch as Milly's angst, also seems to pertain to a fear of women's potential power (Sharpe 86). As concluded below, Suse's sexual blossoming takes the shape of a potential threat, and becomes as repellent as the invasive King Devil, an 'alien force' to be tamed, subdued, or owned. Interestingly, deeply affected by this 'fear' and a subsequent sense of ownership, Nunn viciously exclaims: "Aye lord, women were like horses; a dumb lazy filly with foal was the easiest broke to plow of all" (207); once again, a diminutive woman-animal intersection cannot be mistaken here.

The sociolinguistic concept of discursive relations investigates the extent to which power relationships are aptly conveyed through speech forms in a narrative. This concept is here briefly applied to survey the amount of domination seeping through textual speech patterns, as the reader is made aware of the startling semblance between the vociferous brutality targeted at animals, and the callous/dominative undertone carried in the speech towards women. As Bou-Franch clarifies, "sets of values and beliefs shared by social groups and expressed through discourse construct, reproduce, perpetuate and/or resist gender inequalities" (3).[155] In the novel, Milly is often cut short by a repertoire of aggressive and stinging phrases—she should learn "to mind her own business" (Arnow 1949 74) for instance, or else "shut up" entirely (195), a discursive position she further projects onto her daughter Suse. On the other hand, at times when Milly stands up in protection of an individual animal's flourishing, this is seen as a naïve form of sentimentality—mere simplistic child play—for it is of general consent that "a woman cain't manage a hound" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 218) or any animal that is wild, for that matter. Hence, the trope of the 'domesticated woman' resurfaces here and is emphasized by her mandatory involvement with all the other inferior "beasts of the earth" (331). Crossing from a wilder conceptual geography, nonhuman others, even though offering potentiality for alterity, remain sealed in a narrative of masculine bravery, dispute, and conquest.

[155] For a more complementary list of authors producing in the field of a feminist sociolinguistics consult Bou-Franch.

Thus, it is a wholesome Christmas when with secret relief, Milly realizes that she "wasn't in the family way" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 102). On top of that, "Nunn had neither hunted all night before nor went off and got drunk during the day" (idem). Notice how two sources of worry, affliction, and oppression are interspersed here; Milly directly relates Nunn's absence (and ensuing wild-life destruction) to her own lack of reproductive rights. These stem indeed from a joint source, and further solidify the repressive trope of 'woman-animal intersectionality' that I have hitherto explored. I want to accentuate how the void of a sensitive, empathic approach, or the medical aid that Arnow's pregnant characters ruefully miss, likewise indicates a form of culturally female backgrounding. If not gifted by other community women, or to be found in the company of nonhuman others, care values remain an issue remotely consigned to the domestic space. Wagner-Martin concurs, as she maintains that "her own condition [Milly's] and the fragile health of the children are dangers Nunn conveniently overlooks" (73)[156] an issue only Sue Annie and Suse Ballew seem to critique. Even though convinced by Milly herself, "Nunn had no right to treat [her] so, going off like that when she was expecting any minute", Sue Annie declares (Arnow, *Hunter's* 230).

As I have explored thus far, backgrounding and instrumentalism remain deeply entangled into our present discourses and ways of perceiving the word and embolden the idea/practice of atomistic separation. All three woman-animal repressive mechanisms hitherto presented aim for the continuous and obstinate assurance that privilege and power belong to man alone. However, ironically, the master entity remains dependent upon his subjects' labour, while those of a 'diminished status' often endorse the mechanisms and institutions of the 'master entity'. The three explored fundaments transpire indeed one recurrent pattern, that of a patriarchal denial of dependency, for a discourse of hegemonic rationality is sustained by those who are subsumed by it (women and animals); the domestic sphere of reproduction supports both the local community and the more public realm of 'production;' and the female gift of procreation is 'made male', so to speak, through management and control.[157] I further agree with Plumwood, who sustains that the "denial of dependency is a major factor in the perpetuation of the non-sustainable modes of using nature", and our exploitative manners of using human

[156] Whereas I do agree with the critic that many times Nunn overlooks the well-being of his family—not without grave remorse—it must be acknowledged he also gently saves his baby from dysentery. The scene further reflects the growing conflict between Milly or Sue Annie's cures, herbal and folkloristic, and scientific methods Nunn retrieves from scientific "books on livestock" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 243).

[157] Anne Oakley goes as far as to suggest that "wombs of women [are] containers to be captured by the ideologies and practices of those who do not believe that women are able to take care of themselves" (quoted in Mies and Shiva 27)

others as well (*Feminism* 21). As we will shortly see in the conclusion of this piece, Suse, while reaching most closely to full transgressive experience is, paradoxically, the character who most suffers from this repressive and 'enchained' complex.

Hence, Nunn consumes the goods offered by his soil, as carefully 'reproduced' by Milly in the domestic unit, yet he does not celebrate enough the value of, nor does he retribute, both the land or Milly's endeavours. The few times that Nunn zealously works his fields, for instance, is when he agrees to an 'AAA deal' incentivizing the testing use of soil fertilizers.[158] I return to Shiva's vision on 'patriarchal economic bias', which, against a backdrop of hardening capitalism, heralds everything that is natural, pristine, or untouched by machines as "unproductive" (3)—indeed a wasteland, as Snyder would maintain (11). In Shiva's own words: "nature and women working to produce and reproduce life are declared unproductive" (*Staying Alive* 42). Female procreative capacities are rendered valuable only insofar they are, as Nunn's ambiguous relation with the land testifies, controlled and regulated by man himself.[159] The fertilizer—or the "stinking stuff" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 158)—encapsulates a human and poison-like regulation over the earth and resembles the patriarchal control over women's embodiments in the novel.[160] Nonetheless, in Steinbeck's words, "nitrates are not the land" (115), yet their irresistible allure seems to spur Nunn's exchange with it (the land).

4. Mountain Religion and Patriarchy

One day, one of the Ballews' neighbours is found guilty of blasting countless fish with dynamite, an 'innocent' way of garnering winter provisions, "with no thought for breaking laws or making money" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 185). When Rans Cramer, the culprit, receives a menacing visit from "the law" (idem) the community, in utter indignation, unanimously affirms: "God made the fish free in the river" (idem) and while it "wasn't exactly right to dynamite and kill all the baby fish" (idem), the heart of the argument is tactfully redirected as to focus on the God-pronounced sovereignty of Appalachians as 'chosen people'. The notion

[158]The AAA, known as the Agricultural Adjustment Act, was an economic plan of the American 'New Deal' designed to end agricultural surplus production. According to Ezekiel and Bean, American industries, associated to agricultural production risked collapse; synthetic fertilizers (13) were hence distributed to farmers, not only as a way of bettering rural productivity, but certainly as a way of saving larger agricultural industries.

[159]Hence, as Mies and Shiva (*Ecofeminism*) both agree, it is not surprising how the gradual dismissal of organic growth cycles and the industrious manipulation of seed, appeared in concert with various modernized sciences of (female) reproduction.

[160]The degree in which farmers manage and exploit the (deemed female) land against the rise of technology, has further been studied by authors such as Little or Bryant and Pini.

of freedom in question here is that of human individuals over other sublunary beings,[161] the fish are *free* in the river, free for human use, that is. What becomes apparent to me is that most mountain women from Milly's generation, make a variety of decisions based on Biblical or religious laws. Indeed, every other oppressive mechanism explored thus far, division of labour, or reproductive management for instance, is 'institutionalized' or naturalized by religious creeds.

As Chambers writes, residents of the Appalachian community cannot, at times, step outside the limits of their own cultural/religious conceptions—how dares a state's officer meddle with the word of God over the 'unlimited' freedom the Appalachian man enjoys in his Garden of Eden, they might surmise. Indeed, if the mountains represent the limits of physical reality, as I have explored in chapter two, the Bible appears to be the strict handbook defining how one must live and behave, in order to preserve an order that is ancient and natural, socially *naturalized*. As Emma Bell Miles has suggested, this may indicate the reason why women are regarded as the 'guardians' of the past or belonging to the "old people" (69), an allusion not only to the unfortunate and premature deterioration of the female body, but to the greater and antithetical implication of women in religious matters and beliefs. Returning to the above-included example of dynamiting fish, the crux of the argument is dexterously warped: rather than displacing the idea of freedom onto the individual nature of each (killed) being, it endorses a certain behaviour/mechanism that continuously justifies the exploitation of (inferior) nature. Curiously, as has been intimated along this chapter, while broadly invested in religious belief, hampering her own and her daughter's wish for emancipation, Milly does not perpetuate, however, a discourse of biblical anthropocentrism in the non-human realm.

Additionally, notice the following example: under the strain of exhaustion, Milly vents her frustration directly to God and demands: "did you have a spite against us [women] when you created us from Adam's rib?" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 59). Again, the answer lies obscured within the formulation of the question and, as Frye would contend, the character's critical agency remains undermined by her imperceptive support of the patriarchal and religious structures themselves (78). Milly reminds me of the caged bird, perched too closely upon its imprisoning bars to envision her own freedom, an image presented in chapter one. Curiously, while she remains painstakingly aware of the secondary status attributed to femininity, Milly questions a

[161] There is an ongoing discussion in ecological studies, as well as in religious revivalism, about whether the Bible should be read as God allowing for the domination or 'subduing' of all earthly beings, or if humans were merely to exert a form of tutelage or guardianship.

remote 'divine' source, and not by all means the socio-cultural complex that manipulates such laws, of which she herself is a participant. Indeed, commenting on Arnow's work, Weston remarks how women suffer under "grinding poverty, uncontrolled childbirth, and the inhumanity of Calvinistic religion" (2), rooted in and allied to an overarching patriarchal structure. I want to emphasize how religious belief/practice is, in fact, influenced by a rural or mountain patriarchy, that further controls and limits female embodiment and access to privilege. However, as Deborah McCauley cautioned, this is not to say that religion is simply one of a local patriarchy's by-products, it presents a distinct framework, conditioned by, and, to a certain length, inseparable from the study of Appalachian values and experience altogether ("Introduction" 52).[162]

There are two questions that are given special relevance in the novel, and which will be briefly intermeshed here. First, there seems to be a particularly female religious questioning that is targeted at the God-figure himself; the Calvinistic interpretation of the 'naturalized' human gendered condition is taken too literally, and hampers women's lives in ways more repressive than their male counterparts'. De Beauvoir's words come to mind, namely that femininity cannot merely stand for the uterus, the empty vessel (23), nor be metaphorical of the home space itself. I thus argue that just as much as King Devil's body becomes a symbolic place representing Nunn's own 'misguided patriarchal stance', so becomes Milly's, and more adamantly still, Suse's body, places of unrelenting cultural violation. Secondly, a Calvinistic system of beliefs does not envision nature as gifted with an individual soul apt for salvation, and should not, therefore, as Milly guiltily recalls, receive the same devotion as offered to her human community: "if'n a hound goes anyplace, he goes to hell" Father Samuel preaches (Arnow, *Hunter's* 58). Hence, as Torrance underlines, mere physicality, as opposed to (human) spiritual purity, does not encapsulate the idealized path towards salvation.

Furthermore, as stressed above, an intersection between women and animals is mutually exploited by a religious and patriarchal framework. In *The Telling that takes Us Home* it is highlighted that:

> People frequently connect the assault they see inflicted upon nature with the abuse of women. When they lament the rape of Earth, this strong language is not merely a figure of speech,

[162] In the Appalachian context, the umbrella term that has unanimously been employed to encompass the myriad local nondenominational churches or religious sectarian groups is 'mountain religion'.

> but points to the real and violent ways that the bodies of women are violated, abused, and exploited in acts of power and possession (12).

As I elucidate further in this section, local religious traditionalism, fundamentalism and Biblical literalism engender specific bodily natures as "key site(s) of oppression" (Gilleard and Higgs 35), human and nonhuman alike. In addition, Miller and Arnow herself (*Flowering*; *Seedtime*), have posited on the degrees in which grating poverty, social backgrounding, and loneliness may "contribute to their [mountain women's] belief in God" (Miller 139)—and to their own apparent alignment to, or enforcement of a structure that is deeply curtailing. Beaver concurs when she argues that women's increased participation in the realm of church activity grants them a form of "sublimation and relief of anxiety" (105), possibly a 'rationalization' of, and an escape from familial oppression and hard toil.[163]

Nevertheless, church appears to embody but a poor outlet for transformation or sublimation, for religious forces are brought into question, throughout the entire novel. *Hunter's Horn* documents female characters' wavering attitude that shifts either between a mild mistrust of God's ways, or a zealous emotional surrender to all that God is and represents. Ultimately, as Bell Miles has put it, fundamentalism induces one to believe that nothing one must go through has ever been unheard of; it regularizes, in that sense, one's own suffering. Indeed, if one's sorrow is 'rationalized', and interpreted as divinely proclaimed, it is easier to accept one's hard lot (Bell Miles 66-67).[164] On the other hand, while Milly's mind probes into expressive doubt, regarding the twists and turns of her own life-path, hardly does she realize that the constellation of social forces driving her to such a state of despondency and spiritual need seems largely aided by, or allied with, the religious veil she seeks refuge under.

The term fundamentalism is best defined by Janet Welch who speaks of an "intense religiosity with its emphasis on the necessity of being 'saved', its condemnation of human sinfulness and evil nature, its preoccupation with punishment and reward in the hereafter, as its 'distrust of the world'" (58). Indeed, the revival scene incorporated in the novel—a typically Appalachian

[163] There seems to be a 'feminization' of religiosity documented by Appalachian scholars, and while in some respects women may enjoy a greater scope of local influence or responsibility through church activities, they remain, unfortunately, targeted most severely by certain religious tenets/practices. As we see in the novel, female characters remain harshly subordinate to male priests. See Meyers or Beaver (*Community*).

[164] I am further reminded of Corie Call, the main female character in Arnow's first work Mountain Path, who "without being a pessimist (…) expected the worst of all possible combinations in all things, and as a result was eternally grateful for some little things" (Arnow, *Mounain* 215)—contentedness and simplicity are indeed two of the most commendable Appalachian values.

form of religious gathering and uninhibited celebration that is often stereotyped in popular culture—most tellingly illustrates this God-fearing disposition and dogmatic mechanisms of thinking.[165] In fact, the idea of ultimate salvation is partly employed to protect established gendered roles. Throughout this chapter, I have used the concept of 'natural' or 'naturalized laws' precisely in that sense: the deemed 'unnaturalness' of certain behavioural patterns, identities or transgressions is repudiated mainly by its acquired aspect of sinfulness (Torrance xvi), and leave the social power balance wholly undisturbed. For instance, the literalist interpretations of the Bible, vehemently stress the belief that difference between man and woman, humans and nature is inherent, natural, and divinely pronounced. Accordingly, in the revival scene, Father Battle John manipulates women into believing that "only God could make a hell" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 337), should they not comply with their *naturally* appointed functions, or the word of their commanding husbands.

Moreover, all local congregations and forms of belief, apart from minute specificities, respond to similar undergirding principles (McCauley, "Introduction;" Jones, "Mountain Religion;" Albanese).[166] Mountain religion is, hence, considered a "regional religious tradition" (McCauley, "Holiness" 104) set apart from other American religious practices or systems of belief. The reasons for this embosomed localism are attributed by religious historian Catherine Albanese to "natural geography (…) past and present human history, and [to] the real interaction of both" (quoted in McCauley, "Introduction" 54).[167] In fact, the profuseness of nature evokes strong religious parallelisms, especially, as I argued in the previous chapter, that of the Edenic trope. A richly 'encultured' garden of Eden remains protective of an initial law or prelapsarian state of lost harmony, referring to what Leo Strauss has, in a different context, envisaged as the overarching human desire for regression.[168] If we keep in mind the correlation of social, geographical and religious factors, and, as explored in my second chapter, the fact

[165] According to Walsh, such gatherings are "spots of local color" (160) and are usually concerned with the salvaging of individual souls and the fanatical/mass concentration on the idea of afterlife. The exhorting male preacher stresses sinful behaviour, also as a way of controlling social conduct and, as I explore below, fields of local privilege.

[166] Despite existent variation, all different religions stem from what McCauley has called "plain folk-camp meeting religion" ("Holiness" 110), the religious meetings held by poor farmers during the 19th century, mainly in the southern territory of the United States.

[167] In *America: Religions and Religion*, Albanese further discerns regional religious traditions, as resultant from the interplay of four different aspects: creeds—what people believe in; codes—the ways in which beliefs dictate how people behave; cults—the ways in which people worship; and community, how religion knits people together (9-10).

[168] In his essay "Progress or Return?" Strauss argues that within the cultural/social impulse of going forward there is always envisioned an idea of lost perfection, which is retrieved in the past, and traced to an Edenic beginning. In the American context, Rogin has argued that a liberalist and expansionist ideology carries within itself the wish for regression to a state of purity: "at the heart of ambitious expansionism lay the regressive impulse itself" (270).

that women cultivate reciprocal relationships with the land, as a re-experience of the mythic 'frontier garden', it becomes clear to me how Arnow succeeds in combining a deep sense of collective wistfulness, a cultural propensity towards the 'past', with a strongly enrooted religious practice and belief. Even the relationship with animals, for instance, although rejected as profane, speaks volumes of the regressive movement of, or willingness to return to one's own childhood, or, more remotely still, to a collectively shared past (Torrance 4).

In fact, religious discourse is profusely reflected onto the land. The multiple references to "God's plenty" or divine abundance (Arnow, *Hunter's* 307) inspire a collective yearning for "the way things used to be" (Welch 54), while they correspond, likewise, to the founding American myths taken into consideration before. Yet, in line of what I argued in chapter two, and returning to the garden or pastoral metaphor, unbounded human manipulation or exploit in the name of perfecting a deeply humanized territory obfuscates the various bioregional boundaries or dynamics. On the other hand, while the mountains and forests may incarnate "God's awesome cathedrals" (Davies 9), nature is not believed to possess a Christian soul—its subjectivity is negated. When Zing dies for instance, Lee Roy, Milly's younger son, is not so much shaken by a sudden sense of loss as by the belief that "if you ain't got no soul you cain't (…) git saved an git to heaven" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 72).[169] This brutal dissipation or annulment of self in his nonhuman companion exceeds his authentic and unpolluted ways of seeing the world. Regarding this vision of natural passivity and inertia, Lovejoy maintains that "all of the earth's creatures formed a linear, hierarchical chain of increasing perfection whose apex was God" (quoted in Mason 11), indisputably incarnated by man.[170] Thus, I find it extremely significant that Milly, embedded in a cultural and religious discourse of mundane passivity—a discourse that she herself, as we saw, many times perpetuates—is nevertheless able to respect an idea of subjectivity among nature's *other* dwellers.

Additionally, as Riesebrodt contends, a religion that constrains yet defines a cultural system by literalism or Biblicism, and which substantiates social precepts that privilege the male class, constitutes a form of "religious patriarchalism" (quoted in Rose 10). In the novel, the

[169] Lee Roy has a wonderful conversation with his teacher Old Andrew, a "wise old man" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 69) that loved to have Zing in his classroom. He assures the conflicted youngster that "heaven's chuck full a hounds, and all other kinds a dogs too, but especially hounds" (72).

[170] See Ruether, Figs, or Whitehead. According to Ruether, the idea of an Adamic "original male" functions as bedrock for our reality-construal (25). Furthermore, reality is construed from a male vantage point; all that is female is historically deemed secondary or a sign anomaly. In that sense, a man is thoroughly "made in God's image while woman as woman does not possess the image of God in herself; [she] images the subordinate self" (Ruether 26).

archetypical figure of the "strict, suffocating Calvinist" (McCauley, "Holiness" 105),[171] embodied by Battle John, represents such strident patriarchalism, as he aims to impose multifarious restrictions. The boisterous revival ceremony is particularly exemplary of this: "oh, my daughter, think on your sins, come up and mourn fer your sins" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 340) is one of the many hymn-like utterances that associates femininity with original and irrepressible sin. Meyers concurs, as she argues that women often partake in (another) "master-servant" bond, in relation to God (84): they must worship a male deity who holds immense symbolic power over their individual embodiments, in much the same degree that they must "work and wait on" their husbands (Arnow, *Hunter's* 319).[172] A complex which aims at social limitation, that wages against healthy fluidity, and that is passionately embraced by women—oftentimes the target of such castrating mechanisms—seems to engender a major conundrum here. It is precisely this ensconced strategy that is "used to coerce or torture women" like Milly or Suse, Ballard agrees (147), as it "protects and isolates a privileged group" (Plumwood *Feminism* 49).

On the other hand, fundamentalist religious structures or organizations seem to establish "strategic alliances for particular purposes as suits their ultimate goals" (Freeman 182). Translated to a gendered framework, the crippling religious design at hand has recycled the notions of purity, domesticity, piety and sexual abnegation that have largely defined the paragon of femininity (Hastie 82) in Appalachian history. Much indebted to Victorian ideals of womanhood, the social curtailments ardently deny maturing women like Suse their fundamental right to their sexuality and reproductive decision making. Not surprisingly, "marriage and motherhood (…) remain [also] the institutions which most obviously and individually maintain female accessibility to males" (Frye 108). Though lamenting the discovery of her seventh pregnancy, Milly believes that as a woman she must bear her burden silently: "women were made to have babies; it was a sin not to want them, and a black, black sin to try to keep from having them" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 148).[173] In fact, the reason why maternity or the domestic sphere gains such appraised merit in fundamentalist cultures is that it keeps both the male and female ethos of being well discerned and enshrined (Margolis 14),

[171] McCauly ("Holiness") argues that this archetypal figure has also been exacerbated and somewhat stereotyped in the local literature.
[172] In that sense, "the salvation experience is consistent with the image woman has of herself as the submissive wife" (Meyers 85-86).
[173] This form of patriarchal control is indeed assured through religious belief. In the novel, Father Samuel is described as one of the very few who did not tell women that "their babies were gifts from heaven" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 287).

protecting a desired form of womanhood. It is this rigorous model of womanhood that creates such a complex dynamic in Arnow's work. Milly's (oppressive) wish to see her daughter become a 'virtuous woman' is, however, not relativized by her own necessity of (domestic) sublimation or expansion.

In truth, Christian or Victorian gender tenets aim for the art of *not transgressing* (Appelros; Welter; Hackett). The quenching of female temptation, alongside the historical denial of the female body, propitiates the myriad ways in which femininity remained hampered.[174] Indeed, in fundamentalist cultures, female embodiment, sexuality and sexual pleasure have been relegated to an inaccessible or *unnatural* area (Margolis). In the novel, Suse, alongside Sue Annie, is one of the few characters that develops an unsullied capacity of judgement, penetrating through the futility of the "whole pattern of sin and immorality" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 338) and, yet, from the beginning of the narrative, the reader is made aware how Suse suffers most severely under the local religious and cultural tenets. Notice how the character must forfeit facets of her individual (bodily) expression/experience, in fear of an "angry God" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 326), or the inflammatory gossip of neighbours. While dreamily listening to the distant fox hunt, a passage I described in the previous chapter, Suse is indulged by a melodious banjo. Desire starts to well up in her, as "it would be fun to dance to Mark's banjo music, even if it was a sin" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 32). Female characters' prohibition to express themselves corporeally, be it through rhythm and dance, certain clothes, make-up, or sexuality, perpetuates the social and primeval belief in the tempting and transgressive vile hidden in all that is female (Griffin 9).

In the novel, the implications of a "patriarchal politics of identity" (Appelrose 461) and the cultural renunciation of female embodiment lead me to the issue of reproductive rights. Aware of the political implications of her body, Suse recalls her most subsistent childhood memory, "the wish she'd been a boy" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 333).[175] Somewhat paradoxically however, Milly's mind compassionately wanders out to her own daughter at times, whom she does not want to see submitted to a similar fate. Whereas it is true that she imprisons her with the very same role(s), she laments the fact that it 'has to be like that', as it "would be better never to

[174] In fact, 'religiosity' was 'made' a feminine ideal or value. As Plumwood argues "Christian overtones of Fall and feminine redemption, which appeared in Victorian times as the view that women's moral goodness, their purity, their patience, self-sacrifice, spirituality and maternal instinct meant either they would redeem fallen political life" or, on the other hand, that their righteousness should not be blemished by partaking in it in the first place (*Feminism* 9).

[175] This recalls the illusory stratagem underlined in my first chapter as female "uncritical reversal" or negation (Plumwood, *Feminism* 31).

have a girl child" at all (Arnow, *Hunter's* 56). In *Mountain Path* for instance, this maternal concern is well expressed when Corie, the main female character, regards her own maturing daughter and wistfully muses how her "waist would twist yet more when she carried her own children instead of her mother's, and the bend of her shoulders grew with her children, so that at twenty-five she would be an old woman, never having been a young one" (125). Sadly, this is exactly what awaits a dreamy and perhaps over-ambitious Suse Ballew, who, in light of her final 'downfall', has little but the lack of control and proper knowledge 'to blame'.[176] Indeed, not long before bearing her own child, does Suse discover that "babies did not sprout from toenails planted" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 312).

Indeed, angrily leaving the revival meeting, Suse stumbles upon Mark, who seems to be "hunting her out" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 43). His gaze presupposes not only objectification, but it may also carry the same need for conquest that propels Nunn after the vixen.[177] Whereas the text remains somewhat obscure, as to Suse's willingness to engage in sexual intercourse,[178] it is a fact, however, that Mark steers the reigns of conversation and decision-making. From a standpoint of discursive relations, shying away from Mark's somewhat forceful encouragement— "his hot insistent hands" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 345)—Suse is smothered to silence. When Mark pleads "'aw Suse, don't be afraid of me—nobody ull know'. An (…) 'if you're already gone to hell, ruined your reputation, what difference does this make anyhow?" (idem), he misses the point altogether.[179] Something tells Suse that "it was wrong for them to stay so late in the empty house together" (idem). Yet, textually, negation is not an option, for she is never allowed any form of protestation. Then, afterwards, when Suse assertively denies embarking on a life with someone she does not truly love, Mark disdainfully relocates the entire centre of decision-making and responsibility onto her: "my God Suse, do you think I am not good enough for you after—after *what you've done?*" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 349, my italics). In

[176] In Appalachia, as Hastie has argued, no woman was accepted to enquire into the workings of her own body and sexuality. Such curiosity leads to 'disgracefulness'. The lot that sometimes fell upon open-minded, self-assertive women is explored in popular mountain folk ballads: extreme violence and femicide.

[177] In her essay "License to Kill", Kheel illustrates how the metaphors and jargon of hunting are not only associated to self-empowerment, but often charged with erotic meaning as well. Indeed, the metaphorical elasticity of the word 'hunt' should be noted here: one hunts after what one wants to acquire and possess, forcefully.

[178] While sexual engagement is not directly represented in the text, it is strongly implied. Indeed, Suse's subsequent pregnancy confirms this.

[179] Whereas we can argue that Mark demonstrates compassion and understanding when meeting a bewildered Suse at the revival congregation, this last utterance of insistence seems to betray his real interests. Suse, conflicted and in shock, relates her moments of rebellion in the congregation, to what Mark answers: "Aw Suse (…) this place and that crazy preacher ud make anybody cry", assuring her to pay no mind to the idea of social reputation or image (Arnow, *Hunter's* 344). Hence, it seems disrespectful to me that Mark later employs the idea of social reputation, yet with a thoroughly different purpose; reputation is first dismissed as to soothe Suse's anxiety, later it is reused as a form of coaxing and personal insistence.

the face of rejection, Mark's relentless urging is turned entirely against her: it is Suse, a pregnant and unmarried young woman who bears the lasting wounds of public defilement.

Furthermore, the passage in the novel that most hauntingly recreates the cultural void of such rights and freedom, inasmuch as how this lack strategically stems from a patriarchal design, is Milly's neighbour, Lureenie Cramer's fatal episode of childbirth. Upon her deceptive experience of urban exodus, Lureenie's condition is enfeebled by a major fault in the community/kinship system. Indeed, during her funeral, it is with a heavy heart that Nunn and Suse faultily acknowledge their own proud negligence. Additionally, from the first pains of Lureenie's relenting labour process, Sue Annie actively cautions: "that woman's got to have a doctor" (317). Breaking the silence, Keg Head, Lureenie's severe father-in-law, brings it upon himself to issue a vital decision: no word of a doctor, for "it was against the Bible" (314). It is interesting to underline here that while the scriptures declare no "man doctor" (idem) should assist in a woman's birthing, Keg Head, a man, seems bold enough to manage the well-being and vitality of a woman's body. This form of extreme power, or decision making, is one that we find replicated again in the conclusion of the novel, leading to Suse's tragic relinquishment. The decision must unequivocally have been Lureenie or, at best, Sue Annie's by right: each woman should make whatever decisions necessary over her own body, untrammelled by extraneous or patriarchal impositions. Milly herself can unfortunately not surmount the limitations of her blind belief, for she echoes that "God's will is God's will" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 314) and "if [God] wanted to take another one to the graveyard and then to heaven (…) His will be done" (332).[180] The individual needs of a woman in sufferance become backgrounded and are textually lost among the spectators' turmoil. Lureenie, babbling the words of a woman beyond lucidity "begged to be killed, begged for a doctor" (317), fatal utterances that would, after her death, locate her not by the side of God, but ignominiously burning in "th flames uv hell" (336).

Nevertheless, Suse Ballew, whose growing insight and ideal of liberation serve as main intra-narrative source of critical commentary, bursts in the wake of Lureenie's suffering, with a pressing anger that is directed, in a gradual way, at Keg Head's decisions,[181] her own father's negligence, and ultimately, at God himself. Truthfully, by no other character is the coalition

[180] During Lureenie's funeral, Father Samuel acknowledges the need for a doctor in childbirth: "th woman died because we stood by and watched her die fore we'd try to get a doctor" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 326). Milly is unable to understand this, for she has successfully 'rationalized' the departure of her own children.

[181] It is tragically ironic that in the end, because of her pregnancy, Suse will be handed over to this character, by tradition forced to live with her future 'in-laws'.

between patriarchal and religious interests grasped and vociferously rebuked as by Suse herself. She tragically envisions the bitter irony of a fervently praying Keg Head, when the emergency of life-saving assistance is, by him, denied. Unable to remain passive, she revolts against the man: "God damn th ole stingy son of a bitch" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 318) she screams. Her outburst further ramifies, and rather than words of 'female derangement', Suse utters one of the deepest indictments in the narrative: "God damn the God damned God" (319) not only for bringing things to this end, but to cast such a symbolically hefty, yet pathetic thrall over her own fellow community members.[182]

Shocked and embarrassed, Nunn urges his daughter home, claiming he "ought to beat [her] half to death" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 319). When Suse attacks her own father's passivity, blaming him for the arduous conditions their family have undergone, Nunn "with the sickish feeling that he lied" affirms "you know I've done th best I could by your mom" (idem), to what Suse retorts: "aw hell. You've always done th best you could to keep her [Milly] in the family way" (idem). Suse bravely concludes that, if hating her God, and leaving her community is what it takes to protect the sacredness of individuality and independence, then no act or belief can become personally more pressing than that of her forthcoming commitment. I leave the full significance of Suse's transgressive vision for the conclusive remarks of this piece; for now, I end this section by stressing how the character transpires an inalienable need for 'self-definition' (Frye 105-108).

Conclusion

Employing an empowering woman animal simile, De Beauvoir has defended woman's sovereignty over her own fecundity and life. She maintains: "there are female animals that derive total autonomy from motherhood, so why has woman not been able to make a pedestal for herself from it?" (97). As we saw, domestic efficiency, or female 'reproductivity'—both material and biological—are successively made into a 'weakness', for they restrictively define women's experience and individuality. As to the novel's represented systems of oppression and transgression, I analysed human-animal intersections from two distinctive vantage points, one transgressive, the other repressive. These four major fundaments (division of labour, belief in female irrationality, procreativity and religious fundamentalism) illustrate the ways in which these repressive associations function. Yet, they equally contextualize the myriad ways in

[182] There seems to be a direct allusion here to Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn.* Suse, just like Huck, seems to reject a punishing God in favour of her own conscious. In affirming "all right, then, I'll go to hell" (237), Huck is not dissimilar from Suse's bold decision: "She could never love God" (Anrow, *Hunter's* 342).

which mountain women endeavour to re-create and sometimes sublimate these mutually affecting and hierarchically inferior connections into a blooming form of respect, solidarity, friendship and care. One of the key aspects that I have sought to emphasize along my dissertation is how negative values of diminishment, frustration, self-abnegation and oppression can be empowered through, and transformed into, solidarity systems that mostly benefit a given receiver—the potentially oppressed other—yet that can equally extend fulfilling transgressive experience to the downtrodden performer. Nunn's character, for instance, can be read as a textual reminder of how men are, ultimately, also subjected to a patriarchal legacy. On the other hand, both Milly or Nunn's quests demonstrate how once a certain screen of 'self-other' separation is broken, luminous moments of tenderness and compassion can be exchanged between us, humans, and animals. However, as *Hunter's Horn's* closure bitterly reminds, though valuable, individual transgressive experience is not enough, for evasion does not change the subjacent structure.

From a standpoint of oppressive dynamics, two distinct positions seem to emerge. Indeed, when speaking of woman-animal interactions, Milly does visibly not further engender instrumental oppression to her domestic and articulating animals. This is all the more relevant for the character cannot refrain from immobilizing her own daughter. Wavering, at times, between compassion and severity, Milly does not, ultimately, attain full transgression, for the character remains most forcefully allied to the laws, traditions, and performative roles that are continually imposed on her. It is, in that sense, only on the outer borders of the human, cultural or social realms that she can start to envision a shift in performative values. Hence, women like Milly begin to find alterity and liberty in a distinct territoriality that is "composed by other bodies that interact, intermingle, and affect each other in multiple ways" (Iovino 38). Yet no character succeeds in finding personal strength and meaning in such a state of 'multifarious flourishing' as Suse Ballew. In fact, as we will shortly see, Suse's remains the key liberational discourse envisioned by the author.

Thus, to bring back the animal into focus, I argue that King Devil is, inasmuch as other female characters, a signalled object by a patriarchal narrative of occupation. Accentuating this very point, and as a way of connecting ecocide to female body exploitation, the vixen is, as mentioned before, caught because of her pregnancy. I do not hereby mean that the vixen is exploited or made inferior due to her embodied condition; still, narrative-wise, representing an elusive and inaccessible entity, whose fatal weakness is being pregnant, entails a deeply suggestive meaning in the overall narrative and fictional community. Once caught, its skin

exposed as a trophy on Nunn's wall, the vixen's body becomes, just as female embodiment, a symbol or site for the textual expression/projection of patriarchal power. Both woman and animal embody here, what Edward Casey and Luce Irigaray envision as "bodies-as-places" (Casey 323), instead of bodies moving in place.

In fact, in her analysis of the Aristotelian body-vessel concept, Irigaray considers that historically the female body has been presented as a two-fold container, either as woman or as mother. Should woman turn inwards for instance, she would find two empty spaces "for which she is a container—man and the child", the author postulates (41). Following that line of thought, Milly, Suse, Lureenie, or King Devil, possible narrative reflections of one another, are not containers of themselves, for themselves. As I explore in the conclusive remarks to this dissertation, the vixen's empty skin becomes much indicative of Suse Ballew's own relinquishment of her embodiment. To end this chapter, it seems of paramount importance to stress how pregnancy, in a world where women do without, cannot, by means of patriarchal management, be rendered a fatal weakness. Women should not be reductively regarded as a 'containing vessel', in much the same ways that wild animals, or the concept of wild nature in general, ought not to be construed as fundamentally menacing or empty. Ironically, Suse, shaken to the core by Lureenie's suffering and death, is warned by other community women who seem, perhaps unconsciously, to entrust her with the achievement of a more luminous future: "you'll be in Lureenie's place soon enough—*if* you're like the rest of us" (317, my italics) they pensively concede.

Interestingly, and returning to my title, God often metamorphoses into a vengeful devil: "sometimes, instead of a good kind Jesus smiling over them all from somewhere behind the sky, there was a grinning, red-eyed devil, hot-breathing and hard as the cracked earth" Milly often thinks (Arnow, *Hunter's* 210). The cultural landscape that I have critically tackled and recreated is, in that sense, highly uneven: it projects a palimpsest of different myths, truths and individual sensitivities. The often-used expression "where the ground is uneven" (Welch 52) characterizes first and foremost the geographical irregularity of the Appalachian terrain. Yet, in a land that breathes stories, discourses, traditions, practices, and remembrances, how can individuals or collective groups remain intact, uncontaminated by such volatile plurality? Above all, aside from the dominative mechanisms I intended to present in this chapter, a complex multiplicity of experiences, approaches, relationships, individual yearnings or shortcomings highlighted how, contrary to what a literary ecofeminist framework often forwards, no character can be read as thoroughly assuming the lines of a 'dualistic

compartmentalization'. From a narrative standpoint, it is, I believe, such distinctive abundance of intention that can, for better or worse, kindle different forms of power relationships. Hence, Arnow has woven an equally uneven narrative territory, a place where all voices, animal, man, woman, or child, can, in all (un)healthy difference, coalesce, and participate in what Dillard calls the "infinite ethos of the moment" (96).

"Wingless Flights": A Conclusion

"I will lift up mine eyes onto the hills, from whence cometh my help"
(Arnow, *Hunter's* 179).

Hence, what does it mean to live without, in a land that has, paradoxically, such motley abundance to offer? In the sequence of the two broad textual analysis chapters presented, I am left with two intertwined and final questions. While furnishing a potential answer for these questions, I will simultaneously explore the closing of the novel, the critical apogee of Arnow's proto-ecofeminist vision. Indeed, how can the humanized, domesticated, or 'encultured' landscape be made detrimental to femininity, nature or ultimately even to masculinity? In other words, how can the domesticated or intermediary landscape thwart the characters' experience and embodiment, is my first question. Subsequently, if the land is englobed in an overarching system of domination, 'usurped', thus, by the patriarchal stamp of ownership, is it not counter-sensical for younger women like Suse to seek liberational potential in nature, especially since, as we saw, women are culturally held on a par with the concept of inferior animality? Some of Suse's moments of interchangeability with surrounding geography seem to indicate so: throughout a considerable part of the narrative, her dreams of individual emancipation equate with escape and evasion, as the character's experience remains blighted by the crippling patriarchal discourse that has seeped through the 'cultural landscape'. The tragic nadir of the narrative—King Devil's entrapment—strategically aligned to Suse's forced abandonment of her family, accentuates, as I conclude here, the symbolical unification of characters, completing the trope of intersectionality that underpins ecofeminist philosophy.

Ironically enough, the character who appears most assertively critical of her enveloping reality, most drastically suffers at its hands. As we have started to see in the last chapter, narrative-wise, Suse signals a moment of culmination or climax, that is, all threads, strands, ideas, hardships or illuminating possibilities explored along the novel coalesce into this very character's personal itinerary, paving the way to the dismemberment of a family and of a universe of individual dreaming. Truthfully, just like King Devil, while gasping for freedom and a space she can call her own, Suse finds herself more and more ensnared in the plans and projects of domineering others. The inhuman amounts of domestic labour she is expected to carry out, as well as the lack of love/affection from both her parents, are greatly influenced by the oscillations of Nunn's success in the hunt. On the other hand, her ambiguous involvement with Mark Cramer, a boy she admittedly does not love, yet whose afterglow of city life remains

enticing enough, and a subsequent pre-marital pregnancy—a social act of sin and defilement—render her to the opposite margin of her dreams, to a position of startling similarity with the chased and ultimately vanquished vixen.

The lines of a patriarchal and disembodied approach to nature, called into question along this dissertation, and situated in a specifically American historical narrative of place-making, not only disclose "master narratives of domination", what I called 'speciesism' or 'ecophobia', but they simultaneously endeavour to naturalize, as we saw in chapter three, "gender dualities and bodily boundaries" (Gaard, Estok and Opperman 2). In fact, this startling socio-cultural network of limitation, frustration and curtailment is projected onto, and may become part of the land. What I mean is that, while remaining a physical and all-pervading realm, nature encompasses the domain where "non-human entities are incorporated into *human cultural understanding*" (King, "Construe Nature" 101, my italics). In fact, if 'cultural understanding' is wound up around notions of ownership or utilitarianism, fuelled by the desire to "tam[e] what is wild" or deemed as chaos (Griffin 103), we can begin to understand how a specific form of landscape may interfere with some younger characters' need for authenticity. Yet, while Arnow proposes distinct strategies of individual character liberation, allying her fictional women more closely to the ailing land, or else projecting them into landscapes that are not 'tamed' or 'inscribed', the author fulfils a conceptualization where the singleness of a cultural reality and the acuteness of female emancipation can find (some) compatible expression. As I will shortly illustrate below, it is in a particular form of nature that *Hunter's Horn's* younger female characters must find a healthy balance between either dislocation or continuous cultural ignominy, for "the deep connections with the hills" can hardly ever be undone (Mullins 20).

In addition, as Murphy ("Rethinking") or Gaard ("Strategies") underline, ecofeminist works of literature should not only critically deracinate relationships rooted in dualism or hierarchical power mechanisms, but also highlight strategies of liberation, usually through the embodied experience of, or the dialogical relationship with, nature. In my introduction I called attention to the fact that by scrutinizing the multiple ways in which women inhabit a 'land of do without', the reader should also seek for ways in which these women 'make do', thus searching for illuminating alterity. In each of my chapters I explored a distinct yet interrelated facet of this elemental simplicity and, in that sense, I hope to have accentuated, on the one hand, how care and solidarity ethics remain essential for the better accomplishment of 'earth-harmony', and, on the other, how this approach stems from epistemic situations or contexts of relationality. Indeed, this 'allyship' may draw strength to the human character, as much as it extends the idea

of subjecthood and flourishing to every living being. As Joanna Pocock writes, if we collectively allow ourselves to descend from our unbreakable status of 'predator' (30) and experience the vulnerability of existing among other independent selves, a wish for intersubjective dialogue will incontrovertibly reappear. As both Milly and Nunn's characters evinced, it is from moments of personal susceptibility that human-nonhuman forms dialogue most easily spring.

Before delving into a brief conclusion on the ecofeminist potential of a wilderness spatiality for Suse's character, I want to stress Arnow's impressive achievement in keeping individual context at the core of her liberational discourse(s). Through Milly, Suse, and Sue Annie, the author has depicted four different, though many times intersecting, discourses of potential transgression of gender constrictions. Hence, in the novel, the idea of liberation is not presented as a shiftless constant. Retelling her own experience among Appalachian women, Mullins has argued that (eco)feminisms must not be "defined in a way that isn't possible for many women" to learn or benefit from (25). In that sense, and as a summation, I started by illustrating how forms of personal transgression may be gleaned from the elements of community, caregiving, story-telling, or domestic sublimation, even though not all characters can identify with these possibilities. The main argument that permeates my second chapter is that an augmented scope of domesticity, what I called a 'heroic' or place-based domestic performance, elicits women like Milly, even if somewhat paradoxically, to subvert and cut through the many constrictions of the patriarchal middle landscape, until they reach a pristine and independent sphere of nature—the wild. This broadened notion of 'home' urges us to see that the gifts of the earth are to be shared with other subjectivities.

As I have previously argued, the predominantly female effort of 'sprucing up a home', which lies at the heart of Kolodny's feminist revision of the frontier myth, envisioned not a blunt and instrumental transformation of nature, but cooperation and dialogue, an understanding that each organism "has been made for itself", to inhabit its own place (Muir, *Sierras* 14). However, a landscape that is all-pervading—a sort of 'genealogical' or even 'phenomenological terrain'—may entail an ambivalent significance. While ecologically it does protect and foment a certain simplicity of living, against the impending inflow of modern technology for instance, socially it most certainly stalls the need for authentic individual becoming or emancipation, for renewal. Indeed, as referred in chapter two, the 'stagnant order' of an agrarian setting hardens an idea of 'timeless naturalness', often at the root of strict personal, gendered, and social boundary/role negotiations that I have further explored in chapter three. As Elizabeth Woody eloquently

suggests, in a Native American framework, the past should be visited and learned from "not in a linear fashion (…) but cyclically" (quoted in *Harjo and Bird* 513), the eyes fixed on the present. Keeping this cyclicity in mind, I indeed conclude that an ecofeminist set of values can coincide with, or is to be harboured from, the alternative frontier narrative that continually informs Milly's domestic quest.

However, if a humanized or 'encultured' landscape points, as Muñárriz has argued, to the significance of the "representational context [that the individual] shares with members of his or [her] own cultural milieu" (51), the novel's female characters' efforts to evade the strictness of that environment by seeking for alterity in other forms of life is of great ecofeminist significance. Indeed, in chapter three, I have illustrated how Milly seeks communication with domestic and wild animals as a way of trespassing the cultural definition of her own bodily boundaries. Yet, whereas the relief and extremity of the land, inasmuch as human-nonhuman interactions, aided women like Milly in the making of 'felt place' or in attaining liberational potential, the character can hardly gift this possibility to her own daughter, whom she at times brutally constricts to the roles and boundaries she herself seeks release from. In that sense, Arnow envisions Suse 'path of becoming' differently: she demonstrates a deeper yearning to leave 'mountain life' altogether and, contrary to Milly, she seems to refuse to "reinvent the enemy's language", as Gloria Bird and Joy Harjo have written in another context. For her, liberation does not mean a form of silent transformation, but rather a severance from the kernel of the oppressive force itself. Unlike Milly, Suse refuses to participate in, or reinforce patriarchal structures, such as fundamentalist religion or the strict division of labour. In that sense, an affinity with nature must manifest beyond domestic ritualization or, in other words, the 'American Eve' must find her place, thoroughly and unmediated, in wilderness as well.

In fact, the defining trope of emancipation that Arnow's critics have bestowed to Suse Ballew is that of escape. As explored in chapter three, the encroaching roles of housewife and mother, buttressed by religious patriarchalism, may yield a pliable and subversive margin for women like Milly, yet they bear no longer the same promise for the younger 'mountain generation'.[183] The thought that "a body could take the start in the post-office path and keep right on, past the end of the gravel and into the highway and end up in Detroit" (276) is to Suse a wellspring of curiosity and solace. In addition, mostly blaming her egocentric father and her harshly

[183] This is most certainly one of the more positive effects that comes with the period of 'transition' that the narrative encompasses. While an independent and self-subsistent mode of life may become threatened, urbanisation brings along the defining lines of new possibilities and realities, especially for those socially and culturally most restricted.

unbending mother, while maturing out of adolescence, Suse can de-personalize the source of her pain: her anger hardens towards an idea of God and its cultural manifestation.[184] However, this does not mean that she does not mourn or berate her mother's surrender to patriarchal expectation. She often queries if Milly, or any other mountain woman, "ever heard the trains blow far away and sad, calling you to come away, calling so clearly you wanted to cry?" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 200). In the end, this becomes one of the main wounds of conflict and sheer incomprehensibility between mother and daughter. For Suse, a personal yearning for escape becomes a bold necessity: "she'd make her own life; it wouldn't make her" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 228).[185]

What critics failed to observe is that beyond the tenacity of cultural conventions, Suse retrieves a unique lesson from nature: the motions and teachings of freedom. The shifting form of impermanence in the wild (Snyder 5) counterweighs the stagnancy of the agrarian and domesticated landscape and, as Margaret Fuller explores, becomes instructive in its "incessant [and] indefatigable motions" (3). The putative 'lawlessness' and majesty Suse or Milly envisage in King Devil's running for instance, inspires a need for self-independence. Truthfully, some critics have argued that, in the end, *even* nature seems to work against Suse or the Ballew family in general. Wagner Martin seems quick in blaming nature for the devastating wildfire that burns "the forty dollars that might have given her [Suse] an escape" (76) and that were hidden under a mossy rock. Yet, the spreading wildfire is a consequence of Nunn's negligence: "if he hadn't started the fire to smoke out a fox, he'd never have got his farm burnt off" the narrator affirms (Arnow, *Hunter's* 361), pointing, thus, to no adverse complot played out by nature itself.

Furthermore, the anxieties of ownership or geographical boundaries have no implications in Suse's process of identity making/securing, as they do, for instance, plague Nunn. Suse retrieves in nature one boundless property of wisdom and promise, perhaps only delineated by the chasm that separates domesticated, humanized, and in that sense 'patriarchalized', nature from an open realm of anonymity, even if in Appalachia, this separation or pastoral design is somewhat complexified, as illustrated in chapter two. In addition, as I have elucidated in

[184] I am reminded of Zitkala-Sa who resents God for having dwarfed and paralyzed his subjects to such pitiful extent (111).

[185] As Eckley ("Artistic Vision") has suggested, Nunn and Suse may be textually juxtaposed, for they inhabit their individual projects with equal vehemence: just as Nunn is pestered by King Devil's grin in every one of his undertakings, so is Suse's every moment of the day attuned to her final resolution. The difference that Eckley seems to overlook, is that the reason why Suse's craving gains such personal momentum is partly a corollary to Nunn's negligence, her mother's obstinate persistence, and the increase in her own workshare.

chapter three, just like their nonhuman companions, mountain women risk a certain 'domestication', a clipping of the wings, so to speak. While older women engage in a fluidity of spatial and species boundaries, Suse seems to succeed most in disentangling wild geography from the thralls of memory, cultural heritage, superstition, or what I referred to as a 'power-over complex', the latter of which we saw marring Nunn's interrelationship with nature and community. Interestingly, as mentioned in chapter three, whenever given the chance, Suse takes refuge in the space that ambiguously symbolizes wastefulness, sinfulness, primitiveness and the blandness or terror of a terrain unshaped after anthropocentric *dictums*.

In that sense, wilderness, or the idea of wildness, while so profusely abundant, may prod Little Smokey Creek inhabitants into a state of fear and revolt. It is, after all, a wild animal, or what Faulkner ingeniously envisioned as the timeless 'beast' or human-other clash[186] that propels Nunn into a battle he can never truly win. In fact, from a local gendered perspective, his own acquired mental wilderness—a quasi-hysterical and dangerously compulsive state—points to emasculation, the stigmata of male shame and defeat, or, as we have seen, it may point to dehumanization altogether. The fact that Nunn's behaviour is lambasted, considered profane, due to his deviation into a domain of mental/emotional instability or passivity—attributes pejoratively linked to a historical template of 'uncontrolled femininity' and animality—speaks of the unpliable facet of social gender expectation and it underlines, once again, the local devalued nature of both women and wilderness. Nunn battles the dual forces of the archetypal 'demi-god'—rising above all nature and its denizens—and that of 'the beast' itself (Torrance 22). Truthfully, at a certain point in the novel, the vixen no longer presents an abrasive threat to communitarian well-being. She is either collectively forgotten, attacking other communities, or salvaged on the sly by women like Milly. Somewhere in time, Nunn took it upon himself to transform the natural and instinctual fulfilment of an individual animal's needs into a mordantly personal assault.[187]

Hence, what follows is a vision where Nunn shifts from hunter into hunted object, chased by an inner and uncontrolled compulsion. Interestingly, in "Reading the Passions", Peter Harrison maintains that the successful immobilization of nonhuman others ultimately tries to master the 'animal' in the self, or as Arnow suggests, "the crazy wildness of [our] own thoughts"

[186] See Faulkner's short story "The Bear".

[187] Captain Ahab's unbounded frenzy is not at all that dissimilar from Nunn's 'paroxysms'. When Melville's character exclaims: "I see in him [Moby Dick] outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate (…) I will wreak that hate upon him" (136)" I am recalled of Nunn's ultimate sense of irrationality and dehumanization.

(*Hunter's* 369). There is indeed a palpitating sense of 'wildness' about Nunn's character that is culturally associated to the naturalization of the feminine (Fudge, *Perceiving*; Plumwood, *Feminism*). Considering the dualistic construction of identity, Nunn hovers more closely to the culturally inferior disjuncts of "emotion", or "nature", than to their conceptual opposites—reason and culture. When the narrator maintains that "more and more as he hunted alone through the fall it seemed as if he went against all things" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 226), it is suggested that Nunn goes many times against his own sense of reason or control. The character hunts to smother his own growing sense of emasculation—possibly his own process of covert naturalization/feminization, and his combat is, thus, one where the "human heart is in conflict with itself" (Rogers 17). This tautological pattern has become familiar by now: the wild is a conceptual and complex territoriality where men are taught to seek their own grandness through overpowering conquest, while some women may transform the putative manifestations of their own 'socio-cultural inferiority' into a text of greater intersubjective continuity. For Suse, this realm is congenial to "a hunger like a hurt, an ache for things mysterious and unseen, nay, undreamed" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 199), even though in the end, its culturally compromised meaning plays against her.

Hence, returning to Suse, while lamenting her mother's apparent smallness of dreams, the character starts seeking liberation through the embodiment of, or identification with, wild and untamed nature. She often pensively queries whether "they [mountain women] ever wanted to run and run through the woods on a windy moonlight night in spite of what God would think and the neighbors say?" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 200). In the following paragraphs I forward a concluding answer to the questions presented above, in order to understand whether nature, humanized as it is, could aid mountain women attain fuller emancipation. I will sketch out Suse's remarkable endeavour to "liberate herself from the language of ownership" (Ozdek 66), something the character is visibly not confronted with in a 'wild spatiality'. In sequence of the multiple strategies explored along this piece, I conclude that this is the key discourse of liberation furnished by the author, and, ultimately, Suse is the character that most fiercely aims for full transgression. If indeed a form of return or coming back to one's individual self remains the ultimate materialization of freedom,[188] Emerson's adage seems appropriate here: eventually, one needs to retire from the complexities of social structure (2). From a standpoint of gender dynamics, while often inspiriting the mysteriousness of sexuality, the profusion of

[188] Contrary to what the word might imply, transgression is, thus, as Nan Shepherd writes in *The Living Mountain*, a return to oneself, and not a form of reaching 'over' or 'beyond'. "I am not out of myself, but in myself" Shepherd states (201), describing her life-long relationship with the Scottish Cairngorms.

nature offers Suse "a life away from (…) the paternal gaze" (Ozdek 66), be that her father, her mother, Mark, or even God's.

In fact, as Borrie, Pohl and Patterson have argued, wilderness "can aid in our deconstruction of gender and gender stereotyping" (415), given that much of the injustices women and other social others suffer are "often the result of socialization" (416). In that sense, what Suse seeks in the wild is something "larger-than-human" (Snyder 100), something that evades the ultimate relativity of human, social, and cultural makings. As I have stated in chapter two, I find Snyder's conception of 'wilderness' most suiting to describe the character's individual quest: "wilderness is a place where the wild potential is fully expressed, a diversity of living and non-living beings flourishing according to their own sorts of order" (12)—indeed, an independent or personal 'order' is precisely what Suse dreams of. Truthfully, no sense of anticipated satisfaction—nor even Mark's Detroit-detailed letters—is as intensely experienced as the contemplative solitude found on the Pilot Rock Mountain. It is interesting to note, hence, how this spatiality engenders such very different meanings to Suse, Milly and Nunn.

Undeniably, it is on the interstitial limit between the garden landscape and the dense pine forested summits that Suse experiences the stirrings of self-knowledge and sexual awakening. She becomes as if spellbound by "a place of deep mystery, unknown and exciting, full of the dark dangers people said city life held for girls" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 229). At this point, I want to recall the importance of boundaries and liminality, concepts that have aided me many times in the construction of my arguments. For Nunn, different spatialities are rigorously divided by his irrational approach to King Devil; for Milly, there is a larger fluidity between different spaces or communities, yet place remains much mediated or 'filtered' by a domestic sense/role of caring/nourishment. Ultimately, Suse's character calls for an unmediated overstepping of such boundaries. Perhaps without entirely grasping it, she experiences specific feelings, or a specific need, in a territory that is wild, yet which she eagerly projects onto an urban chimera. Interestingly, as she cannot follow the gravel road to Detroit, she veers off into the opposite direction, into the depth of the woodlands, for "of all places she knew, she loved the Pilot Rock best" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 293).

As Suse makes her ascent, "up and up until the tops of high growing poplars were below her and she and the steep face of the rock she climbed were alone together" (293),[189] a sense of

[189] Interestingly, as mentioned in my second chapter, 'ascension', seeking or living in the higher altitudes of the mountains, has been described by local thinkers and authors as the movement towards one's own (cultural)

unity between woman and mountain is forged. While the character sets out to learn the manifestations of freedom, observed in the flight of birds or the running of forest animals for instance, her need for integration catapults her into the flourishing web of biological plurality. Notice how Suse becomes almost as if one with the body of rock she climbs, herself and the face of rock "alone together" (idem). It is clear to me how the path of alterity threaded by the novel's female characters, leads, ultimately, to a greater continuance between all forms of life. This opens an additional and constructive meaning to the expression of 'doing without': the beauty of material simplicity is answered by a redirection of the senses onto all that moves around us. In addition, it is in the realm of wilder nature that an idea of unlimited potentiality is unceasingly played out. As Annie Dillard insightfully reminds, the multiplicity of existing forms and behaviours in natural creation must inspire us towards a greater diversity in our social systems: no one, or no behaviour, is '*unnatural*'. On the other hand, as Suse observes the motions and workings of 'pristine' nature, an interesting shift seems to occur: she slowly becomes mesmerized by the wonders of nature itself and the promise of urbanism seems to evaporate. In that sense, Arnow celebrates the respect of individual telos and maximum natural flourishing, without forsaking the political/individual demands of her younger female characters. When the narrator affirms that, "on clear days the hills rolled in blue waves into infinity; and her [Suse's] thoughts could go rolling with them (…) free as birds flying" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 293), what might initially hint at the symbol of liberty, embodies the quiddity of freedom itself. In this glimpse of 'identification with' Suse is free(d).

A few moments later, the character is greeted by a flock of wild and clamorous geese, a passage I have alluded to in my second chapter. The reader is indeed made aware of Suse's awe and admiration:

> She could make out the V-shaped bands moving high and effortlessly across the sky (…) one band flew straight over her head, so low she could see the beating wings of the leader who held together the two long lines behind, meeting in him, then spreading outward into the sky, weaving, bending like grass-blades blown in the wind, waving far outward at times, like the slowly opening wings of some fantastically shaped bird, then closing until the birds seemed a line of black dots

identification with the Appalachian Mountains (Trout 2-3). Whereas in this particular case, I believe it illustrates the character's symbolical movement of reaching closer to an individual and emancipatory ideal, rather than cultural, I can likewise not disregard the fact that 'the mountains' are often described as a magnetizing force, and as Lureenie's example illustrates, render a thorough segregation from their culture and landscapes often impossible or, in the end, undesirable.

> in the sky, the lines never still, never breaking, with each goose keeping his proper place. (293)

The cluster of birds gives shape to an idealized, almost sacred geometry: being in close unison with others does not preclude independence; in other words, pluralism should not forfeit individual telos or well-being. Notice how the birds can "wave far outward at times" (293) and when 'closing in' be accepted in return, not ostracized to death like Lureenie Cramer, for instance. In nature itself, community or the collective is not defined by religious dictums, denigrating woman-animal connections, background/foreground mechanisms, gender expectations or neighbours; not even God seems to steer the effortless motions of these beings. Indeed, non-stratified identification becomes a main trope here, a marriage between outer stimuli and inward senses (Emerson 6). Without forceful self-imposition or self-effacement, Suse unites with what she observes, a glimpse of "the eternal, if not infinite" (4), as Margaret Fuller wrote. The character is absorbed by an all-encompassing feeling that she cannot express or place properly, by "something inside her, like the spirit of God that came on Milly at church, rising and flying with the birds, straining after them" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 294). Of all the novel's characters, Suse reaches closest to a liberational and transcendental experience.

Therefore, identification crystalizes an inner need— "the knowing deep inside her that she, Suse, would go away into new fine country, as the wild geese were going now" (idem). Suse is overcome by feelings of independence and authenticity, a need for her own migratory movement. In that sense, the distance from the social, economic, cultural, and religious forces, which prove maiming in all possible ways, contains the first element of my conclusive vision. Indeed, Arnow forges a narrative parallelism between King Devil and Suse, two fleeing beings interconnected by their shared need for a wild spatiality and the final thrust of their trajectories. Nonetheless, Miller's wonderfully suggestive title, '*Wingless Flights*', points to a much-repeated motif: the thousands of wingless voyages mountain women have dared to take, and which have tragically met defeat. The fire Nunn leaves "against all law and reason (…) unattended in the woods" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 346) is, in that sense, a textual foretaste of the final tragedy that encompasses all.

Hence, it remains difficult to speak of full transgression(s) in the novel. Suse remains most transgressive in her denial of patriarchal/religious fundamentalist structures, or in her self-constructive foray into 'the wild', yet, in the end, she is victimized, bereft of individual power vis-à-vis the cultural or local ideological force field. I agree that the unresolved potential for

liberation may problematize my purpose of finding 'proto ecofeminist' traces in the novel, still I must remind the reader of Arnow's two-fold mission, presented in chapter two. The tension between liberational possibility and its subsequent textual quenching encapsulates the complex balance taken between historical realism—how things effectively unfold in the specific locale—and a critical, personal concern for those most entangled in the cultural strands of history.[190] As we saw, Milly's character may be imbued with a hue of ecofeminist sensitivities; nevertheless, she is complexified by her inability to diverge from a deeply ingrained patriarchal mindset. While ecologically valuable, Milly's dialogue with the scarred land and the constructive liaisons exchanged with non-human beings are not commensurate, or perhaps not entirely compatible, with the harsh incomprehensibility that cleaves her from her daughter. In that sense, I find that, as a critical or literary analysis tool, ecofeminism may, at times, strive too hard to compartmentalize characters, situations or modes of behaviour in dualistic and somewhat restrictive ways. As we saw, neither Nunn nor Milly embody rigorous paragons of one mode of being or another; Arnow certainly develops characters with different tendencies, yet both are unmistakably products of their "natureculture" (Haraway, *Species*).

However, I can speak of ecofeminist traces pertaining to Arnow's overall critical approach to her narrative. Indeed, the plight for female education and emancipation, the detailed reconstruction of childbirth scenes, the deflation of typically masculine hunting tales, and the overall concern with female reproductive rights are also issues that bridge the local with a more universal and pervasively human condition. In the end, even Nunn's compulsion is but a sketch of a larger and intemporal human trait. Indeed, the author demands of the reader an inward scrutiny to see how much of a 'Nunn Ballew' each one of us may bear in ourselves, for, in her own words, this figure is a mere reflection of "a man who neglects his family to rise higher and higher in the business world" ("Interview" 94), or a reflection of some of our actions/positions that inevitably are too self-oriented.

Hunter's Horn, A Closure

Though mustering deep admiration for elemental nature, Suse could hence "never love God" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 342)—she could not love a God whose name justified the deleterious rape and exploitation of women's bodies; she could not love a God whom her own family would, eventually, choose over her individual well-being. Furthermore, it is not at all serendipitous

[190] This duality is also found here, in the structure of my own conclusive remarks. Whereas a first part is dedicated to the novel's key liberational strategy, in a second section, I must also allude to its tragic ending, for it completes the intersectional aspect of the author's work thoroughly.

that the character gets pregnant during the impacting aftermath of the gloomy revival episode, described in my last chapter. Indeed, aside from God, her quarrelling mother or the hypocrisy of neighbours, there is another most decisive 'magnetizing forcefield' to which the character succumbs—Mark Cramer. Curiously, Mark's return from the city happens in synchrony with the 'religious witch hunt', and Nunn's surreptitious exiting from church—unable to stand the religious jargon and his own chase to attend to. There seems to be a narrative overlapping, a moment of confluence between the decisive forces that signal the beginning of the novel's closing. Not only is Suse's own future partly decided in this passage (the revival meeting), Arnow is keen on interweaving, or textually juxtaposing, the motivations and strategies of the hunt, religious dogmatism and female reproductivity, the critical landmarks leading to her narrative climax. Indeed, an image of likeness between Suse and King Devil continues to intensify: two running, female, pregnant, and ultimately mutilated 'characters' foreground the closure of the novel.

Let us therefore return to King Devil and Suse's final 'moments of surrender'. Interestingly, even if thoroughly unbeknownst, it is Milly and Sue Annie who lure the hounds to King Devil's burrow, when crossing the river and the mountain ledge to assist in an urgent call of childbirth, as described in chapter two. Nevertheless, Milly fails to exude any sign of relief, pride or happiness at the putative triumph of her husband; not even the prospect of her own and her family's future stability and well-being can garner her any sense of relief. The ecofeminist narrative of attentive care/compassion, or the intersubjective mode of construal explored along this piece, ultimately inspires Milly to comprehend her own cultural vulnerability. I find it most significant that Milly should achieve a glimpse of self-enlightenment through the compassion offered to a nonhuman other, pointing, again, to the essentiality of trans-corporeal flux. Milly, "running her hand along the fox's belly—something moved feebly under the skin—one jerk and then it was still, like the first and last struggle for life" (395), discovers that King Devil 'becomes', in fact 'Queen Devil', *revealing herself* through the means of what culturally entraps Milly's own bodily experience: procreation. The fatalness of the animal's pregnancy not only gains additional meaning in that it may suggest Milly or Suse's own socially negotiated embodiments, it equally illuminates the reader's perspective on the entire novel. Indeed, the aspect of sexual indeterminacy of the animal completes the vision of "erasure of and the transgressing of bodily boundaries" (Braidotti, "Four theses" 128) explored mainly in chapter three. In hindsight, this indeterminacy may partly deflate Nunn's entire 'campaign', while it equally ironizes our human obsessive angst around social gender

constructions/expectations, or any other boundary delimitation, for that matter. In other words, there is a relevant and symbolical meaning in the 'sexual metamorphosis' of a being that is supposedly male, cruelly and relentlessly besieged, and which is ultimately vanquished due to its biological femaleness, that is, in a cultural environment where female procreation is rendered as a vulnerability.

Surrounded by other women, Milly audibly voices her lament: "'pore thing, if'n she hadn't a been a vixen, they'd [hounds] never caught her" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 395). The character gathers a form of self-understanding or awakening, while assaulting the entire patriarchal structure or form of world/self-construal explored in chapter one. Keg Head, one of the few witnessing men, answers Milly with spiteful misogynism: "what a you a pitying her [King Devil] fer! Better pity Nunn—look at all the time an money he's spent a chasen a fox and it a vixen" (idem). From a patriarchal standpoint, the sex of the chased animal does not make King Devil a "worthy kill" (Emel 724). Thus, culturally, Nunn's adamant attempt at proving virility remains not only flawed by his compulsive and over-emphasized vehemence—by his 'animalization'—but, ultimately, the pursued objected itself appears not indicative of heroic and personal merit. Eight years to catch a vixen, while bringing a family close to ruination, can hardly bespeak a distinguished achievement.

Indeed, it is also strategic and deeply meaningful that the vixen be caught on the threshold of a childbirth gathering. The domestic sphere—conceptually linked, as we saw, to childbirth and the 'female knowledge' of steering new life into existence—thoroughly overpowers the narrative climax. Interestingly, whereas authors such as Paul Shephard have ignominiously compared the killing of a hunted animal to a form of 'masculine rebirth', or to the act of giving birth itself (quoted in Kheel, "Licence" 142-143), Arnow forwards a final vision that unmistakably stresses the opposite: Nunn derives little fulfilling experience whatsoever, from the cumulative act he does not even deserve to witness. It is, at best, a personally illuminating experience, for the character resolves to make amends and share his family's work. Once again, as I hope to have made evident, forms of human-nature unity irradiate from a domestic-oriented narrative, rather than from hunting tales.

In addition, Sue Annie's words, regarding the vixen's body are reminiscent of Suse's own experience: "I guess she [King Devil] figgered she'd ruther die a runnen than be smoked to death er dug out" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 396). Once again Arnow underscores the fact that even if there is no ultimate liberation or transcendence, this does not devalue the will to achieve it.

Truthfully, Holtman echoes this conclusive vision: when king Devil is revealed as a mutilated mother, a "genuine shared experience with the text's female characters" crystalizes (28). Offering a Deleuzian vision of the final stages of the novel, the critic envisages three major instances of fatal female embodiments: Lureenie Cramer, Suse Ballew, and King Devil are textually unified in order to stress "the power of patriarchal culture" (29). Arnow's vision may be considered to reach its critical zenith here: just like Nunn and King Devil, another textual unification is completed, between Suse, King Devil, Lureenie Cramer or any other woman who has fallen victim to this castrating 'body politics'—to the 'body-as-place' trope explored in chapter three. In that sense, the narrative alliance of the dominated human inasmuch as nonhuman other have 'usurped' the masculine 'hunting narrative'. In fact, in seeking a line of continuance between stories staging animal and female violation, Scholtmeijer has equally concluded that "the otherness of women from an androcentric perspective finds a correlate in the more radical otherness of the animal from an anthropocentric perspective" ("Otherness" 305). On the other hand, I find it interesting that Nunn, Lureenie, Milly and Suse all contrive relationships with King Devil that ultimately point towards the deconstruction or deterritorialization of human-nonhuman boundaries.

Then, in the closing pages of the novel, Milly discovers Suse's pre-marital pregnancy, and a form of 'death' also comes to Suse Ballew. While the character confronts the painful disillusionment of her 'final sentence', proclaimed by none other than her father, the reader is strategically distracted by the shimmering red hide that listlessly adorns the Ballews' living room. This same sense of lifelessness is captured in Suse as well, as she frightfully awaits her parents' decision—the description of "her bright head drooped lower and lower like a rain drenched flower at twilight" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 411) creates a visual parallelism and a critical intersection of both (human and nonhuman) beings. In fact, like Lureenie Cramer, Suse does not have a say in the decision of her own future and is told to leave home and face her worst nightmare: live with, and work for the sordid Cramer family, while waiting for Mark's return. Nunn justifies his decision stating: "I ain't a holden the wrong you've done agin you—but this fire—it's never warmed a bastard" (Arnow, *Hunter's* 411), disclosing a layer of authorial irony, for in the eye of the public, the character remained close to 'a bastard' throughout the entire narrative. Also, it is curious how such an idiosyncratic character at last gives in to the pressures of religion and cultural tradition. While the decision seems unanimously supported, Milly bursts at Nunn, mustering a rare courage to reprimand her husband: "you—you've never seemed to mind before what God thought an th' neighbours said" she screams (412). Again,

one should not overlook the sheer power of the cultural edifice: Milly would, most probably, have proclaimed the exact same decision. Later, when Suse's impending absence is most felt, Nunn demonstrates the inchoate signs of a clearer judgment. When recalling the Biblical passage of the Israeli people and their promised land, he mutters "I wonder (…) if'n th ones that got there ever thought about them that died on th way" (412). In truth, Suse and King Devil never did achieve a brighter horizon; even Nunn and Milly seem to have fallen far behind.

Thus, by juxtaposing the suffering of her human and nonhuman characters, Arnow has not only solidified her political vision, namely that women should be entitled to full control and decision-making over their own bodies,[191] but the author has further achieved this through the simultaneous deconstruction of the male hunting narrative, as well as by the demolition of the hierarchical boundaries that separate human from natural concerns or borders, an aspect that has resurfaced many times along the course of my arguments. Truthfully, even if unfortunately signalled by the loss of its own vitality or agency, the animal antithetically "undoes the boundaries between human and beast" (Harrison 13), for a deep feminist concern is deftly intersected with an acerbic stance against what we call today as speciesism and 'ecophobia'. Ultimately, this textual human-animal unification is achieved under Suse and King Devil's identification with (abhorred) wildness, for Suse's fearless 'inquiry' into sexuality and her consequent pregnancy have proven just as alien and potentially harmful as King Devil's multiple intrusions, thus completing one of ecofeminism's cornerstone beliefs: nature and femininity are, in their many conceptual (and threatening) intersections, controlled and domesticated.

[191] In the opening paragraphs of this dissertation, I cited one of Arnow's main beliefs that indeed underpins the entire body of her work: each woman "should have control of her own body" ("Interview" 117).

Works Referenced

Adams, Carol J. "Caring about Suffering, a Feminist Exploration". *Beyond Animal Rights: A Feminist Caring Ethic for the Treatment of Animals*, edited by Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan. Continuum, 1996, pp. 170-196.

---"The Feminist Traffic in Animals". *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 195-218.

---. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-vegetarian Critical Theory*. Continuum, 2010.

Adorno, Theodore, and Horkheimer, Max. *Dialectic of Enlightenment, Philosophical Fragments.* Translated by Edmund Jephcott. Stanford University Press, 2002.

Alaimo, Stacy. "Bodily Natures". *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self.* Indiana University Press, 2010, pp. 1-27.

Albanese, Catherine. "Introduction: An Elephant in the Dark". *America: Religions and Religion*. Wadsword Cengage Learning, 2013, pp. 1-19.

Alves, Isabel. "'Have you ever tried to enter the long black branches of other lives?': a tentação do outro: um exercício de aproximação à Ecocrítica". *Ecocrítica: jornada de reflexão = Écocritique: journée de reflexion*, vol.1, no.1, 2009, pp. 42-52.

Anderson, Lorraine. Introduction. *Sisters of the Earth*. Vintage Books, 2003.

Appelros, Erica. "Gender within Christian Fundamentalism—A Philosophical Analysis of Conceptual Oppression". *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, vol.75, no.5, 2015, pp. 460-473.

Archambault, Anne. "A Critique of Ecofeminism". *Canadian Women Studies: Les Cahiers de la femme*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1993, pp. 19-22.

Arendt, Hannah. "What Remains? The Language Remains: A Conversation with Günter Gaus". *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, edited by Peter Baehr, Penguin Random House, 2003, pp. 3-21.

Arnow, Harriette Simpson. *Between the Flowers*. Michigan State University Press. 2005.

---. *The Dollmaker*. Vintage Publishing, 2017.

---. *Flowering of the Cumberland.* University Press of Kentucky, 1984.

---. “Historical Society of Michigan, The Clarence M. Burton Memorial Lecture, “Some Musings on the Nature of History”. *Harriette Simpson Arnow: Critical Essays on her Work*, edited by Haeja K. Chung, Michigan State University Press, 1995, pp. 249-263.

---. *Hunter’s Horn.* The Macmillan Company, 1949.

---. Interviewed by Mimi Conway. Southern Oral History Collection, 1976. https://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/G-0006/menu.html. Accessed 18-05-2020.

---. *The Kentucky Trace: A Novel of the American Revolution.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1974.

---. “Marigolds and Mules”. *The Collected Short Stories of Harriette Simpson Arnow*, edited by Haeja Chung and Sandra Ballard, Michigan University Press, 2005, pp. 33-40.

---. “Love?” *The Collected Short Stories of Harriette Simpson Arnow,* edited by Haeja Chung and Sandra Ballard, Michigan University Press, 2005, pp. 226-237.

---. *Mountain Path.* The University Press of Kentucky, 1963.

---. *Seedtime on the Cumberland.* The University Press of Kentucky, 1985.

---. “Zekie, the Hillbilly Mouse”. *The Collected Short Stories of Harriette Simpson Arnow,* edited by Sandra S. Ballard and Haeja K. Chung, Michigan State University Press, 2005, pp. 66-77.

Awiakta, Marilou. *Selu: Seeking the Corn-Mother’s Wisdom*. Fulcrum Publishing, 1994.

Baer, Barbara. “Harriette Arnow’s Chronicles of Destruction”. *Harriette Simpson Arnow: Critical Essays on Her Work,* edited by Haeja K. Chung. Michigan University State Press, 1995, pp. 53-63.

Ballard, Sandra. “The Central Importance of *Hunter's Horn”*. *Harriette Simpson Arnow*: *Critical Essays on Her Work*, edited by Haeja Ching, Michigan State University Press, 1995, pp.141-152.

Ballew, Janice V. *A World Within Herself: The Southern Mountain Woman in the Novels of Harriette Simpson Arnow.* 1973. The School of Graduate Studies Drake University, MA dissertation.

Barad, Karen. “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter”. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2003, pp. 801 831.

Bates, Catherine. “Introduction: Masculinity and the Hunt”. *Masculinity and the Hunt.* Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 1-43.

Batteau, Alan. Introduction. *The Invention of Appalachia.* The University of Arizona Press, 1990, pp. 1-19.

Baym, Nina. “The Madwoman and her languages: Why I Don’t Do Feminist Literary Theory”. *Feminist Issues in Literary Scholarship*, edited by Shari Benstock, Indiana University Press, 1987, pp. 45-61.

Beard, Mary. *Women and Power: A Manifesto*. Profile Books, 2017.

Beaver, Patricia D. *Rural Community in the Appalachian South*. Waveland, 1992.

---. “Women in Appalachia and the South: Gender, Race, Region, and Agency”. *NWSA Journal* vol. 11, no. 3, 1999, pp. ix-xxix.

Bekoff, Mark. “Animal Emotions, Exploring Passionate Natures”. *BioScience*, vol. 50, no. 10, 2000, pp. 861–870.

Bell, Shannon. Introduction. *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed: Appalachian Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice.* University of Illinois Press, 2013, pp 1-9.

Bell, Millicent. “Female regional writing: an American tradition”. *Revue Française d’Études Américaines*, vol. 90, 1986, pp. 469-480.

Benjamin, Jessica. “Intersubjectivity, Thirdness, and Mutual Subjectivity”. A Lecture given at the Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis, Los Angeles, CA. 2007.

Bennet, Claire L. *Pond.* The Stinging Fly, 2015.

Berry, Wendell. “The Making of a Marginal Farm”. *The World-Ending Fire: The essential Wendell Berry.* Penguin Books, 2017, pp. 43-51.

---. “The Regional Motive”. *A Continuous Harmony: Essays Cultural and Agricultural.* Counterpoint Press, 2012, pp. 61-69.

Bessetti-Reyes, Gina. *Women and the American Wilderness: Responses to Landscape and Myth.* 2014. McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts, MA dissertation.

Biehl, Janet. Introduction. *Rethinking Ecofeminist Philosophy*. South End Press, 1991, pp. 1-8.

Billips, Martha. “The Writer and the Land: Harriette Simpson Arnow and the Genesis of Her Novel ‘Between the Flowers’". *Appalachian Journal*, vol. 32, no. 4, 2005, pp. 468-482.

Bird, Gloria and Harjo, Joy. *Reinvent the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writings of North America.* W. W. Norton & Company, 1998, pp. 19-31.

Birkeland, Janis. “Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice”. *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 13-59.

Blakeney, Anne B. “Appalachian Values: Implications for Occupational Therapists”. *Sociological Implications in Treatment Planning in Occupational Therapy*, edited by Florence Cromwell, The Haworth Press, 1987, pp. 57-72.

Bogardus, Ralph and Hobson, Fred. Introduction. *Literature at the Barricades: The American Writer in the 1930’s*. University Alabama Press, 1982, pp. 1-13.

Bookchin, Murray. *The Ecology of Freedom, The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy.* Cheshire Books, 1982.

Borrie, William T., Phol, Sarah L., and Patterson, Michael E. “Women, Wilderness, and E omen, Wilderness, and Everyday life: A Documentation of the Connection between Wilderness Recreation and Women's Everyday Lives”. *Society and Conservation Faculty Publications*, vol. 13, 2000, pp. 415-434.

Bou-franch, Patricia. “Did he really rape these bitches? Aggression, women, language”. *Exploring Language Aggression against Women*, edited by Patricia Bou-Franch, John Benjamin’s Publishing Company, 2016, pp. 1-14.

Braidotti, Rosi. “Animals and Other Anomalies”. *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti.* Columbia University Press, 2011, pp, 81-149.

---. “Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism”. *Anthropocene Feminism*, edited by Richard Grusin, The Minnesota University Press, 2017, pp. 21-48.

---. “Metramorphoses: Becoming Woman/Animal/Insect”. *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming.* Polity Press, 2002, pp.117-171.

Brittan A., Maynard, M. *Sexism, Racism and Oppression*. Blackwell, 1984.

Brudzynski, Stefan M. “Communication of Emotions in Animals”. *Reference Module in Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Psychology*, edited by John P. Stein, Elsevier, 2017, pp. 302-307.

Bryant, Lia, and Pini, Barbara. “Gender Rurality and Class”. *Gender and Rurality*. Routledge, 2001, pp. 58-79.

Buchecker, Matthias, Harting, Terry, and Hunziker, Marcel. “Space and Place – Two Aspects of the Human-landscape Relationship”. *A Changing World: Challenges for Landscape Research,* edited by Felix Kienast, Otto Wildi, and Sucharita Ghosh, Springer, 2017, pp. 47-62.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture.* Harvard University Press, 1995.

---. “Space, Place, and Imagination from Local to Global”. The Future of Environmental Criticism. Blackwell Publishing, 2005, pp. 62-97.

Bujok, Melanie. “Animals, Women and Social Hierarchies: Reflections on Power Relations”. *DEP*, vol. 23, 2013, pp. 32-47.

Burge, Penny L. “Triple Roles of Appalachian Farm Women: Household, Farm, and Wage-Earning”. *Research in Rural Education*, vol. 2 no. 2, 1983, pp. 69-72.

Butler, Judith. *Gender trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* Routledge, 1999.

---. “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory”. *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4, 1988, pp. 519-531.

Bye, Linda M. “Masculinity and rurality at play in stories about hunting”. *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2010, pp. 145-153.

Cacek, James. “Confronting Animal Cruelty: Understanding Evidence of Harm Towards Animals”. *Manitoba Law Journal*, vol. 42, issue 42, 2019, pp. 315-342.

Callicott, Baird J. “Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair”. *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 2, Issue 4, 1980, pp. 311-338.

Campbell, John C. “The Rural Highlander at Home”. *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland.* University Press of Kentucky, 2004, pp. 123-151.

Card, Claudia. Introduction. *Feminist Ethics*. University Press of Kansas, 1991.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003.

Carter, B., Charles, N. “Animals, Agency, and Resistance”. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour,* vol. 3, issue 43, 2013, pp. 322-340.

Cartmill, Matt. *A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature Through History*. Harvard University Press, 1993.

Casey, Edward. “Giving Face to Place in the Present”. *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History.* University of California Press, 1997, pp. 285-298.

Cather, Willa. *O Pioneers!* Penguin Books, 2018.

Cerulo, Karen A. “Nonhumans in social interaction”. *Annual Review of Sociology,* vol. 35, 2009, pp. 531–552.

Chambers, Cassie. *Hill Women: Finding Family and a Way Forward in the Appalachian Mountains.* Ballantine Books, 2020.

Chang, Chia-Ju, and Ralph, Iris. “Women and Interspecies Care: Dog Mothers in Taiwan”. *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*, edited by Greta Gaard, Simon Estok, and Serpil Oppermann, Routledge, 2013, pp. 151-166.

Chung, Haeja K. “The Harbinger: Arnow's Short Fiction”. *Harriette Simpson Arnow: Critical Essays on her Work*, edited by Haeja Chung, Michigan State University Press, 1995, pp. 101-116.

Cian, Holly R. *The Exploitation of Women and Nature in Appalachia: An Analysis of Labour Rights and and Environmental Issues as Represented by Three Appalachian Authors.* 2016. The Graduate School of Western Carolina University, MA dissertation.

Clapp, Elizabeth J. “Where I First Learned the Nature of Care: Women and Violence on the Late Eighteenth-century Frontier”. *American Nineteenth Century History*, vol. 16, issue 1, 2015, pp. 59-81.

Collard, Andrée, and Contrucci, Joyce. “Shots in the Dark”. *Rape of the Wild: Man's Violence against Animals and the Earth.* Idiana University Press, 1989, pp. 33-46.

Cooper, C., Knotts, G., and Livingston, D. “Appalachian Identity and Policy Opinions”. *Journal of Appalachian Studies,* vol. 16, no. 2, 2010, pp. 26-41.

Cory, Jessica. Introduction. *Mountains Piled Upon Mountains: Appalachian Nature Writing in the Anthropocene*, edited by Jessica Cory, West Virginia University Press, 2019, pp. 1-12.

Cottingham, John. "'Brute to the Brutes?' Descartes' Treatment of Animals". *Philosophy*, vol. 53, no. 206, 1978, pp. 551-559.

Crevecoeur, Hector, J. "Letter III: What Is an American?" *Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America.* Penguin Books, 1983, pp. 59-80.

Cuomo, Christine. "On Ecofeminist Philosophy". *Ethics and the Environment*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2002, pp. 1-11.

---. *Feminism and Ecological Communities: An Ethic of Flourishing.* Routledge, 1998.

Davis, Steve. "Southern Appalachian Culture". https://databases.lib.utk.edu/arrowmont/Steve/Southern%20Appalachian%20Culture.pdf. Pdf File.

Davis, Donald E. *Homeplace Geography: Essays for Appalachia.* Mercer University Press, 2006.

De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex.* Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Vintage Books, 2011.

Denham, Sharon. "Does a Culture of Appalachia Truly Exist?" *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2015, pp. 1-9.

Dillard, Annie. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2013.

Donovan, Josephine. "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory". *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 167-194.

---. "Ecofeminist Literary Criticism: Reading the Orange". *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism: Theory, Interpretation, Pedagogy*, edited by Greta Gaard, and Patrick Murphy, University of Illinois Press, 1998, pp. 77-94.

Douglas, Mary. Introduction. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and taboo.* Taylor and Francis, 2001.

Drewitz-Crockett, Nicole. *Angel on the Mountain: Homestead Heroism in Appalachian Fiction.* 2015. University of Tennessee Knoxville, MA dissertation.

Dunaway, Wilma. “The Transition to capitalism on American Frontiers: Towards a Paradigm Shift”. *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700-1860.* The University of North Carolina Press, 1996, pp. 1-22.

Dunayer, Joan. "Sexist words, Speciesist roots". *Animals & Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations,* edited by Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, Duke University Press, 1995, pp. 11-27.

Dyer, Joyce. Introduction. *Bloodroot, Reflections of Place by Appalachian Women Writers.* The University Press of Kentucky, 1998, pp. 1-16.

Dykeman, Wilma. *The French Broad*. Wakestone Books, 1992.

---. *The Tall Woman.* Wakestone Books, 1982.

Easterling, Larry Wayne. “Spiritual Care with Appalachians: Beyond Stereotypes”. *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counselling*, vol. 66, no. 1, 2014, pp. 1-14.

Eckley, Wilton. “Artistic Vision”. *Harriette Simpson Arnow: Critical Essays on Her Work*, edited by Haeja K. Chung, Michigan State University, 1995, pp. 45-52.

---. *Harriette Arnow*. Twayne Publishers, 1974.

Eisler, Riane. “The Gaia Tradition and the Partnership Future: An Ecofeminist Manifesto”. *Reweaving the World, the Emergence of Ecofeminism,* edited by Irene Diamond and Gloria Orenstein, Sierra Club books, 1990, pp. 23-35.

---. “Introduction: The Chalice and The Blade”. *Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future.* Harper Collins, 2001, pp. 8-21.

Emel, Jody. “Are You Man Enough, Big and Bad Enough? Ecofeminism and Wolf Eradication in the USA”. *Society and Space*, vol. 13, 1995, pp. 707-73.

Emerson, Ralph W. “Nature”. *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by Brooks Atkinson, The Modern Library, 1950, pp. 3-44.

Emmerson, Caryl and Morson, Gary S. “Global Concepts: Prosaics, Unfinalizability, Dialogue”. *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics.* Stanford University Press, 1990, pp. 15-58.

Engels, Friedrich. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.* Penguin Books, 2010.

Engelhardt, Elizabeth S. “Creating Appalachian Women’s Studies: Dancing Away from Granny and Elly May”. *Beyond Hill and Hollow*. Ohio University Press, 2005, pp. 1-25.

---. “Placing their Feminism in the Southern Appalachian Mountains: Emma Bell Miles, Grace MacGowan Cooke, and the Roots of Ecological Feminism”. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2001, pp. 11-31.

---. *The Tangled Roots of Feminism, Environmentalism, and Appalachian Literature.* Ohio University press, 2003.

Estok, Simon C. “The Ecophobia Hypothesis: Re-membering the Feminist Body of Ecocriticism”. *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*, edited by Greta Gaard, Simon Estok, and Serpil Opperman, Routledge, 2013, pp. 70-86

Estok, Simon C., Gaard, Greta, and Oppermann, Serpil. Introduction. *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*, edited by Gaard, Greta, Estok, Simon C., Oppermann, Serpil, Routledge, 2013, pp. 1-18.

Ezekiel, Mordecai, and Bean, Louis H. “The Economic Situation in the United States 1932-33, in relation to the declaration of emergency and policy of the American Adjustment Act”. *Economic Bases for the Agricultural Adjustment Act.* United States Government Printing office, 1933, pp. 1-6.

Farr, Sidney Sailor. Foreword. *Appalachian Women: An Annotated Bibliography.* University Press of Kentucky, 2014, pp. ix-xiii.

---. “Appalachian Women in Literature”. *Appalachian Heritage*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1981, pp. 10-18.

Faulkner, William. Acceptance Speech Nobel prize. https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/williamfaulknernobelprizeaddressoriginal.htm. Accessed 15-05-2020.

---. “The Bear”. *Go Down Moses*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011.

Fielder, Henry. “The Novel and America”. *Love and Death in the American Novel.* Dalkey Archive Press, 1997, pp. 23-38.

Figs, Eva. “A Man’s World”. *Patriarchal Attitudes: Women in Society*. MacMillan, 1986, pp. 17-35.

Floyd, Janet. “Domestication, Domesticity and the Work of Butchery: positioning the writing of colonial housework”. *Women's History Review*, vol.11, issue 3, 2002, pp. 395-416.

Foucault, Michel. “One: 7 January, 1976”. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-76*. Translated by David Macey, Picador, 2003, pp. 1-22.

Freeman, Lynn P. “Finding our Feet, Standing our Ground: Reproductive Health Activism in an Era of Rising Fundamentalism and Economic Globalization”. *Religious Fundamentalisms and the Human Rights of Women*, edited by Courtney Howland, Palgrave, 2001, pp. 181 193.

Freire, Paulo. “Chapter 1”. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Ramos, Continuum International Publishing, 2005, pp. 43-71.

Frye, Marilyn. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory.* Crossing Press, 1983

Fudge, Erica. *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture*. Macmillan, 2000.

---. “Reading Animals”. *Worldviews*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2000, pp. 101-113.

---. Introduction. *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures.* University of Illinois Press, 2004, pp. 1-18.

Fuller, Margaret. *Summer on the Lakes.* University of Illinois Press, 1990.

Gaard, Greta. “Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature”. *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 1-12.

---. “New Directions for Ecofeminism: Toward a More Feminist Ecocriticism”. *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, vol. 17, no. 4, 2010, pp. 643–665.

---. “Strategies for a Cross-Cultural Ecofeminist Literary Criticism”. *New Ecocritical Perspectives: European and Transnational Ecocriticism*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2010, pp. 47-52.

---. “Towards New EcoMasculinities, Ecogenders, and Ecosexualities”. *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth,* edited by Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen, Bloomsbury, 2014. Pp. 225-240.

---. “Towards a Queer Ecofeminism”. *Hypatia*, vol. 12, issue 1, 1997, pp. 114-137.

Gaard, Greta, and Murphy, Patrick. Introduction. *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism: Theory, Interpretation, Pedagogy*, edited by Greta Gaard and Patrick Murphy, University of Illinois Press, 1998, pp. 1-14.

Ganim, Carol. "Herself: Woman and Place in Appalachian Literature". *Appalachian Journal*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1986, pp. 258-274.

Gantt, Patricia M. "'A Mutual Journey' Wilma Dykeman and Appalachian Regionalism". *Breaking Boundaries: New perspectives on Women's Regional Writing*, edited by Sherry Inness and Diana Royer, University of Iowa Press, 1997, pp. 197-215.

Geology and History of the Cumberland Plateau Web Version - National Park Service. U.S. Department of the Interior. https://www.nps.gov/biso/planyourvisit/upload/webgeo.pdf. Accessed 12-05-2020.

Giles Howard, and Ogay, Tania. "Communication Accomodation Theory". *Explaining Communication: Contemporary theories and Exemplars*, edited by Bryan Whaley and Wendy Samter, Routledge, 2006, pp. 293-310.

Gilleard, Chris, and Higgs, Paul. "Gender, Aging, and Embodiment". *Ageing, Corporeality and Embodiment*. Anthem Press, 2014, pp. 33-50.

Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development.* Harvard University press, 1993.

Glasser, Carol L. "Tied Oppressions: How Sexist Imagery Reinforces Speciesist Sentiment". *The Brock Review*, volume 12, no. 1, 2011, pp. 51-68.

Gottlieb, Esther E. "Appalachian Self-Fashioning: regional identities and cultural models". *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, vol. 22, issue 3, 2001, pp. 341-359.

Griffin, Joan. "Geography as Destiny in Harriette Arnow's Kentucky Trilogy". *Geography and Literature: A Meeting of the Disciplines*, edited by William Mallory and Paul Simpson-Housley, Syracuse University Press. 1987, pp. 94-113.

Griffin, Susan. *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her. The Women's Press,* 1978.

Groover, Kristina K. “Introduction: Re-visioning the Wilderness”. *The Wilderness Within: American Women Writers and Spiritual Quest.* The University of Arkansas Press, 1999, pp. 1-21.

Gruen, Lori. “Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals”. *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature,* edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 60-90.

---. “On the Oppression of Women and Animals”. *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 18, no. 4, 1996, pp. 441-444.

Hackett, David G. “Gender and Religion in American Culture, 1870-1930”. *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* vol. 5, no. 2, 1995, pp. 127-157.

Halperin, Rhoda. *The Livelihood of Kin: Making Ends Meet "The Kentucky Way"*. University of Texas Press, 1990.

Hanna, Stephen P. “Representation and the Reproduction of Appalachian Space: A History of Contested Signs and Meaning”. *Historical Geography*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2000, pp. 179-207.

Haraway, Donna. “Emergent Naturecultures”. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People and Significant Otherness*. Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003, pp. 1-65.

---. “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial perspective”. *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1988, pp. 575-599.

---. “Introduction: When Species Meat”. *When Species Meat.* University of Minnesota Press, 2008, pp. 3-44.

Harrison, Beth. “*Mountain Path:* Writing Beyond Mountain Stereotypes”. *Harriette Simpson Arnow: Critical Essays on her Work,* edited by Haeja K. Chung, Michigan State University Press, 1995, pp. 129-141.

Harrison, Elizabeth J. Introduction. *The Female Pastoral: Women Writers Revisiting the American South*. University of Tennessee Press, 1994.

Harrison, Peter. “The Virtues of Animals in Seventeenth Century Thought”. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 59, no. 3, 1998, pp. 463-484.

Harvey, Fiona. “Climate Breakdown ‘is increasing violence against women’”. The Guardian, 29, Jan. 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jan/29/climate-breakdown-is-increasing-violence-against-women. Accessed 12-06-2020.

Hastie, Christina R. *“This Murder Done”: Misogyny, Femicide, and Modernity in 19thCentury Appalachian Murder Ballads*. 2011. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, MA Dissertation.

Hawkins, Ronnie Z. “Ecofeminism and Nonhumans: Continuity, Difference, Dualism, and Domination”. *Hypatia*, vol. 13, No. 1, 1998, pp. 158-197.

Heller, Chaia. “For the Love of Nature: Ecology and the Cult of the Romantic”. *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 219-242.

Helton, Lonnie R., and Keller, Shirley M. “Appalachian Women: A Study of Resiliency Assets and Cultural Values”. *Journal of Social Service Research*, vol. 36, issue 2, 2010, pp. 151-161.

Henderson, LeAnne Davis. “‘Your Own Born Granmammy Doctored with Rattleroot:’ Folk Medicine in Harriette Simpson Arnow's Hunter's Horn”. *Southern Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 2/3, 2012, pp. 55-73.

Herzog, Harold. “Gender Differences in Human-Animal Interactions”. *A Multidisciplinary Journal of the Interactions of People and Animals*, vol.20, issue 1, 2007, pp. 7-21.

Hobbs, Glenda. "Harriette Arnow's Kentucky Novels: Beyond Local Color". *Regionalism and the Female Imagination*, edited by Emily Toth, Human Sciences Press, 1984, pp. 83-92.

Hogan, Linda, Metzger, Deena, and Peterson, Brenda. Introduction. *Intimate Nature: The Bond Between Women and Animals*, edited by Linda Hogan, Deena Metzger, and Brenda Peterson, Fawcett, 1999, pp. 11-16.

Holtman, Janet. “Countering ‘What God Thought and the Neighbors Said:’ Alternative Gender Possibility and Becoming-Animal in Harriette Arnow’s *Hunter’s Horn*”. *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2015, pp. 21-32.

Homans, Margaret. “Representation, Reproduction, and Women’s Place in Language”. *Bearing the Word*. The University of Chicago Press, 1986, pp. 1-39.

Hornbuckle, Calley. “Anna Letitia Barbauld’s ecological sensibility”. *Literature and Ecofminism: intersectionality and international voices*, edited by Douglas Vakoch and Sam Mickey, Routledge, 2018, pp. 24-39.

Huey-li Li. “A Cross-Culture Critique of Ecofeminism”. *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 272-294.

Huffer, Lynne. “Foucault’s Fossils: Life Itself and the Return to Nature in Feminist Philosophy”. *Anthropocene Feminism*, edited by Richard Grusin, University of Minnesota Press, 2017, pp. 65-88.

Hunnicutt, Gwen. *Gender Violence in Ecofeminist Perspective: Intersections of Animal Oppression, Patriarchy, and Domination of the Earth.* Routledge, 2020.

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Amistad Press, 2006.

Inscoe, John C. Introduction. *The Appalachian Frontier: America's First Surge Westward*, edited by John Caruso, University of Tennessee Press, 2003, pp. xiii-xxv.

Iovino, Serenella. “Toxic Epiphanies: Dioxin, Power, and Gendered Bodies in Laura Conti’s Narratives on Seveso”. *International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*, edited by Greta Gaard, Simon Estok, and Serpil Opperman, Routledge, 2013, pp. 37-55.

Irigaray, Luce. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference.* Translated by Carolyn Burke and Gilligan Gill, Cornell University Press, 1993.

Jones, Loyal. *Appalachian Values*. Jesse Stuart Foundation, 1984.

---. “Mountain Religion: An Overview”. *Christianity in Appalachia: Profiles in Regional Pluralism*, edited by Bill Leonard, The University of Tennessee Press, 1999, pp. 91-102.

Jones, Owain. “Unethical geographies of human-non-human relationships”. *Animal Spaces, beastly Places*, edited by Chris Willbert and Chris Philo, Routledge, 2000, pp. 268-291.

Kallof, Linda and Taylor, Carl. “The Discourse of Dog Fighting”. *Humanity and Society*, vol. 31, 2001, pp. 319-333.

Kemmerer, Lisa. “Ecofeminism, Women, Environment, Animals”. *DEP*, vol. 23, 2013, pp. 66-73.

Kephart, Horace. “The great Smokey Mountains”. *Our Southern Highlanders*. Kellscraft Studio, 2016, pp. 29-46.

Kheel, Marti. “Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology: Reflections on Difference and Identity”. *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*, edited by Irene Diamond and Gloria Orenstein, Sierra Club Books, 1990, pp. 128-137.

---. “From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge”. *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 243-271.

---. “The Killing Game: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunting”. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sports*, vol. 23, 1996, pp. 30-44.

---. “Licence to Kill: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunters’ Discourse”. *Animals and Women: Feminist Explorations*, edited by Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan, Duke University Press 1995, pp. 117-169.

King, Roger J. “Caring About Nature: Feminist Ethics and the Environment”. *Hypatia*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1991, pp. 75-89

---. “How to Construe Nature: Environmental Ethics and the Interpretation of Nature”. *Between the Species*, vol. 6, 1990, pp. 101-108.

Kingsolver, Barbara. *The Prodigal Summer*. Faber and Faber, 2000

Kirkpatrick, Sale. “Dwellers of the Land”. *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision.* The University of Georgia Press, 2000, pp. 41-52.

Kittay, Eva F. “Woman as metaphor”. *Hypatia*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1998, pp. 63-68.

Kolodny, Anette. *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630—1860.* The University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

---. *The Lay of the Land: Metaphors as Experience and History in American Life and Letters.* The University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Kowaleski, Michael. “Contemporary Regionalism”. *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*, edited by Charles Crow, Wiley-Balckwell, 2003, pp. 7-25.

Kreyling, Michael. Introduction. *Inventing Southern Literature.* University Press of Mississippi, 1998, pp. ix-xviii.

Kristeva, Julia. "From Filth to Defilment". *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez, Columbia University Press, 1982, pp. 56-89.

Kronlid, David O. *Ecofeminism and Environmental Ethics.* 2003. Upsala Studies in Social Ethics, PhD dissertation.

Kulick, Don. "Human–Animal Communication". *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 46, 2017, pp. 357-378.

Lahar, Stephanie. "Ecofeminist Theory and Grassroots Politics". *Hypatia*, vol. 6, issue 1, 1991, pp. 28-45.

---. "Roots: Rejoining Natural and Social History". *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature*, edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 91-117.

LaRocque, Emma. "Tides, Towns, and Trains". *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writing of North America*, edited by Joy Harjo and Gria Bird, W. W. Norton & Company, 1998, pp. 361-74.

Lauter, Estella. Introduction. *Women as Mythmakers: Poetry and Visual Art by Twentieth-Century Women.* Indiana State University Press, 1984. Pp. 1-22.

Lawrence, D.H. "The Spirit of Place". *Studies of Classical American Literature*. Penguin Classics, 1990, pp. 3-15.

Le Guin, Ursula K. "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction". *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places.* Grove press 1989, pp. 165-170.

---. May's Lion. *Sisters of the Earth,* edited by Lorraine Anderson. Vintage Books, 2003. Pp. 425-34.

---. "Woman/Wilderness". *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places.* Grove Press, 1989, pp. 161-165.

Leonard, Bill J. "Introduction: The Faith and the Faiths". *Christianity in Appalachia: Profiles in Regional Pluralism*, edited by Bill Leonard. The University of Tennessee Press, 1999, pp. 15-31.

Leopold, Aldo. “The Land Ethic”. *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There.* Oxford University Press, 1968, pp. 221-226.

Lerer, Isabel. Introduction. *The Sport of Spectatorship: Exploring the Agency of Animals through Literature.* 2015. Columbia University, PhD Dissertation.

Lerner, Gerda. “Definitions”. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 231-244.

Lewis, R.W.B. Prologue. *The American Adam.* The University of Chicago Press 1955, pp. 1-13.

Little, Jo. “Masculinity and the Control of Nature”. *Gender and Rural Geography: Identity, Sexuality and Power in the Countryside*. Routledge, 2002, pp. 55-63.

Longenecker, Marlene. “Women, Ecology, and the Environment: An Introduction”. *NWSA Journal,* vol. 9, no. 3, 1997, pp. 1-17.

Lönngren, Anne-Sofie. *Following the Animal: Power, Agency, and Human-Animal Transformations in Modern, Northern-European Literature.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.

Lorde, Audre. *The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.* Penguin Classics, 2018.

Lugones, Maria. “Playfulness, ‘world’—travelling and Loving Perception”. *Hypatia*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1987, pp. 3-19.

Lynch, Tom. “Ecopastoralism: Settler Colonial Pastoral Imaginary in the US West and Australian Outback”. *Australian Literary Studies,* vol. 30, no. 2, 2015, pp. 145-158.

Lynn, William S. “Animals, Ethics and Geography”. *Animal Geographies: Place, Politics and Identity in the Nature-Culture Borderlands*, edited by Jennifer Wolch and Jody Emel. Verso, 1998, pp. 280-298.

Macfarlane, Robert. *The Old Ways*. Penguin Books, 2012.

MacKethan, Lucinda H. “The South as Arcady: Beginnings of a Mode”. *The Dream of Arcady: Place and Time in Southern Literature.* Louisiana State University Press, 1980, pp. 1-17.

Macy, Joanna. “The Ecological self: Postmodern Ground for Action”. *Sacred Interconnections: Postmodern Spirituality, Political Economy, and Art,* edited by David Ray Griffin, Sunny Press, 1990, pp. 35-49.

Mahoney, Michael S. “Technology and the Democratic Ideal: The Search for a Middle Landscape”. Retrieved from https://www.princeton.edu/~hos/h398/midland.html. Accessed 12 May 2020.

Mallory, Chaone. “Acts of Objectification and the Repudiation of Dominance: Leopold, Ecofeminism, and the Ecological Narrative”. *Ethics and the Environment,* vol. 6, no. 2, 2001, pp. 59-89.

Mann, Jeff. Introduction. *LGBTQ Fiction and Poetry from Appalachia*, edited by Jeff Mann and Julia Watts, West Virginia University Press, 2019, pp. 1-7.

Margolis, Maxine L. “Gendered Fundamentalism”. *Women in Fundamentalism: Modesty, Marriage, and Motherhood*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2020, pp. 1-18.

Markus, Hazel R., Kitayana, Shinobu. “Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation”. *Psychological Review*, vol. 98, no. 2, 1991, pp. 224-253.

Marshall, Ian. “Introduction: Walking the Lines”. *Story Line: Exploring the Literature of the Appalachian Trail.* University of Virginia Press, 1998, pp. 1-10.

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden, Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America.* Oxford University Press, 2000.

---. “Pastoral Ideas and City Troubles”. *Journal of General Education*, vol. 20, no. 4, 1969, pp. 251-271.

Mason, Jennifer. Introduction. *Civilized Creatures: Urban animals, sentimental culture, and American literature, 1850-1900*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005, pp. 1-28.

Matthews, Paul. *Words in Place: Reconnecting with Nature Through Creative Writing.* Hawthorne Press, 2007.

McCauley, Debora V. Introduction. *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History.* University of Illinois Press, 1995, pp. 1-44.

---. “Mountain Holiness”. *Christianity in Appalachia: Profiles in Regional Pluralism*, edited by Bill Leonard, The University of Tennessee Press, 1999, pp. 103-116.

McCarthy, Mary. *Birds of America*. Penguin Books, 2018.

McFague, Sallie. *Super, Natural Christians: How We Should Love Nature*. SCM Press, 1997.

McHugh, Susan. Introduction. *Animal Stories.* University of Minnesota Press, 2011, pp.1-23.

Mellor, Mary. "New Woman, New Earth—Setting the Agenda". *Organization & Environment* vol. 10, no. 3, 1997, pp. 296-308.

Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick.* Penguin Books, 2002.

Merchant, Carolyn. Introduction. *Earthcare, Women and the Environment*. Routledge 1995, pp. xv-xxii.

---. *The Death of Nature*: *Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution.* Harper and Row Publishers, 1989.

Meyers, Dolores A. *The Southern Appalachian Poor: Interrelationships between Religion and Culture*. 1970. Marquette University, Ma Dissertation.

Mies, Maria. "Rural women and the world market". *Women and development: The sexual Division of Labour in Rural Societies*, edited by Lourdes Beneria, Praeger, 1982, pp. 1-28.

Mies, Maria, and Shiva, Vandana. *Ecofeminism: Critique, Influence, Change*. Zed Books, 2014.

Miles, Emma Bell. *The Spirit of The Mountains*, edited by David E. Whisnant, University of Tennessee Press, 1985.

Miller, Danny. *Wingless Flights: Appalachian Women in Fiction*. Popular Press, 1996.

Montier, Gail. "The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860, by Annette Knolodny". *Sings*, vol.11, no. 1, 1985, pp. 182-183.

Morson, Gary Saul, Emmerson Caryl. "Global Concepts: Prosaics, Unfinalizability, Dialogue". *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics.* Standford University Press, 1990, pp. 15-59.

Muir, John. *My First Summer in the Sierras*. Dover Publications, 2004.

---. *A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf*. Mariner Books, 1998.

Mullins, Renee D. *Weathered Mountains: A Qualitative Study of West Virginia Women and their Perceptions of Strength, Land, and Womanhood*. 2018. College of Liberal Arts, MA dissertation.

Muñárriz, Luis A. "The Cultural Landscape Concept". *Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana,* vol. 6, no. 1, 2011, pp. 57-80.

Murphy, Patrick. "Ground, Pivot, Motion: Ecofeminist theory, Dialogics, and Literary Practice". *Hypatia*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1991, pp. 146-161.

---. "Rethinking the Relations of Nature, Culture and Agency". *Environmental Values*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1992, pp. 311-320.

Nash, Rodrick. "The Condition of Wilderness". *Wilderness and the American Mind.* Yale University Press 2014, pp. 1-8.

Nelson, Maggie. *The Argonauts.* Melville House, 2016.

Newman, Vicky. "Compelling Ties: Landscape, Community, and Sense of Place". *Peabody Journal of Education*, vol. 70, no. 4, 1995, pp. 105-118.

Nunes, Maria José F. "Religion and Women's Rights: The Fundamentalist Face of Catholicism in Brazil". *Religious Fundamentalism and the Human Rights of Women*, edited by Courtney Howland, Palgrave, 1999, pp. 293-302.

Oates, Joyce C. Afterword. *The Dollmaker*, by Harriette Arnow, Vintage Classics, 2017, pp. 610-618.

Opperman, Serpil. "Feminist Ecocriticism: The New Ecofeminist Criticism". *Feminismo/s*, vol 22, 2013, pp. 65-88.

Ortner, Sherry B. "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" *Feminist Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1972, pp. 5-31.

Osterud, Nancy G. "Gender and the Transition to Capitalism in Rural America". *Agricultural History*, vol. 67, no. 2, 1993, pp. 14-29.

Ozdek, Almila. "Coming out of Amnesia: Herstories and Earth Stories, and Jane Simley's Critique of capitalist ownership in a Thousand acres". *New Directions in Ecofeminist*

Literary Theory, edited by Andrea Campbell, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, pp. 62-73.

Peterson, V. Spike. "Transgressing Boundaries: Theories of Knowledge, gender, and International Relations". *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, vol. 21, issue 2, 1992, pp. 183-206.

Philo, Chris, Wilbert, Chris. "Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: An Introduction". *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations*, edited by Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert, Routledge, 2000, pp. 1-34.

Plant, Judith. "Sharing a Common Ground: Ecofeminism and Bioregionalism". *Reweaving The World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism,* edited by Irene Diamond and Gloria Orenstein, Sierra Books Club, 1990, pp. 155-161.

Plumwood, Val. "Ecofeminism: An Overview and Discussion of Positions and Arguments". *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 64, issue 1, 1986, pp. 120-138.

---. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.* Routledge, 2003.

Pocock, Joanna. *Surrender.* Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2019.

Prajznerová, Kateřina. "Women Farmers' Dream of Home: A Bioregional Analysis of Harriette Simpson Arnow's Hunter's Horn and Barbara Kingsolver's Prodigal Summer". *South Bohemian Anglo-American Studies*, vol. 1, 2007, pp. 102-106.

Ranjith, Reshma. "Ecofeminism, Patriarchy, Capitalism and Post Colonialism in the Indian Scenario: A Short Study". *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 22, issue 9, 2017, pp.18-24.

Rich, Adrienne. "From an Old House in America". *Poems: Selected and New, 1950-1974.* W.W. Norton, 1975.

---. "The Kingdom of the Fathers". *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution.* W. W. Norton and Company, 1995, pp. 56-83.

---. "When we Dead Awaken". *College English*, vol. 34, no. 1, 1972, pp. 18-30.

Riley, Glenda. The Female Frontier: Definitions, Interpretations, and Images". *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains.* University Press of Kansas, 1988, pp. 1-14.

Roach, Catherine. “Loving Your Mother: On the Woman-Nature Relation”. *Hypatia*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2008, pp. 46-59.

Robinson, Marilynne. *Housekeeping.* Faber Modern Classics. 2015.

Rogers, Pattiann. “Animals and People: ‘The Human Heart in Conflict with Itself’”. *Intimate Nature: The Bond Between Women and Animals*, edited by Linda Hogan, Deena Metzger, and Brenda Peterson, Fawcett, 1999, pp. 17-21.

Rogin, Michael P. “Liberal Society and the Indian Question”. Politics & Society, vol. 1, issue 3, 1971, pp. 269–312

Rolston, Holmes. “Ethics on the Home Planet”. *An Invitation to Environmental Philosophy*, edited by Anthony Weston, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 107-139.

Rose, Deborah B. “Dreaming Ecology”. *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness.* Australian Heritage, 1996, pp. 47-58.

Rose, Susan D. “Christian Fundamentalism: Patriarchy, Sexuality, and Human Rights”. *Religious Fundamentalism and the Human Rights of Women*, edited by Courtney W. Howland, Palgrave, 1999, pp. 9-20.

Ross, Patricia. “Wilderness Semantics Defined”. *The Spell Cast by Remains: The Myth of Wilderness in Modern American Literature.* Routledge, 2006, pp. 1-23.

Ruder, Sarah-Louise and Sanniti, Sophia R. “Transcending the Learned Ignorance of Predatory Ontologies: A Research Agenda for an Ecofeminist-Informed Ecological Economics”. *Sustainability*, vol. 11, 2019, pp. 1-29.

Ruether, Rosemany R. “Ecofeminism—The Challenge to Theology”. *DEP*, vol. 20, 2012, pp. 22-33.

Sanday, Peggy R. “The Body as Symbol”. *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality.* Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Salleh, Ariel. “Stirrings of a New Renaissance”. *Island Magazine*, no. 38. 1989, pp. 26-31.

Sandiland, Catriona. “Mother Earth, the Cyborg and the Queer: Ecofeminism and (More) Questions of Identity’”. *NWSA Journal*, vol.9, no.3, 1997, pp. 18-40.

Satterwhite, Emily. *Dear Appalachia: Readers, Identity, and Popular Fiction since 1878*. The University Press of Kentucky, 2011.

Saugeres, Lise. "The cultural representation of the farming landscape: masculinity, power, and nature". *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol.18, no. 4, 2002, pp. 373-384.

Scholtmeijer, Marian "Animal Victims and Human Sexuality". *Animal Victims in Modern Fiction: From Sanctity to Sacrifice.* University of Toronto Press, 1994, pp. 232-309.

---. "The Power of Otherness, Animals in Women's Ficiton". *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, edited by Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan, Duke University Press Books, 1995, pp. 304-341.

Schneller, Anderw J. "Wilderness Act of 1964". *Encyclopedia of Environmental of Environment and Society*, edited by Paul Robbins, vol.1, Sage Publications, 2007.

Schwartz, Ruth. "Housewifery: Household Work and Household Tools under Pre-Industrial Conditions". *More Work for Mother*. Basic Books, Harper Collins, 1983, pp. 16-40.

Seager, Joni. "Rachel Carson Died of Breast Cancer: The Coming of Age of Feminist Environmentalism". *Signs, Gender and Science: New Issues*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2003, pp. 945-972.

Semaldi, Ladislaus, and Shakespear, Elizabeth S. "Rethinking Mindscapes and Symbols of Patriarchy in the Workforce to Explain Gendered Privileges and Rewards". *International Education Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2014, pp. 37-53.

Serpell, James. "The Fall from Grace". *In the Company of Animals: A Study of Human Animal Relationships.* Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 212-237.

Shapiro, Henry. "Appalachia and the Idea of America: The Problem of the Persisting Frontier". *An Appalachian Symposium Essays Written in Honor of Cratis D. Williams,* edited by J. W. Williamson, Appalachian State University, 1977, pp. 43-55.

---. "The Local Color Movement and the 'Discover' of Appalachia". *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920.* The University of North Carolina Press, 1978, pp. 3-31.

Sharpe, Sue. "Sexuality". *Fathers and Daughters*. Routledge 1994, pp. 75-100.

Shepherd, Nan. *The Living Mountain*. Canongate Books, 2008.

Shiva, Vandana. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Survival in India.* Zed Books, 1988.

Showalter, Elaine. "Housekeeping". *A Jury of Her Peers: American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx*. Alfred Knopf, 2009, pp. 471-475.

Smith, Barbara, A. "Walk-Ons in the Third Act: The Role of Women in Appalachian Historiography". *Journal of Appalachian Studies,* vol. 4, no. 1, 1998, pp. 5-28

Snyder, Garry. *The Practice of the Wild*. Counterpoint, 1990.

Speer, Jane H. "Montani Semper Liberi: Mary Lee Settle and the Myths of Appalachia". Southern Women Writers, edited by Tonette Blond Inge, University of Alabama Press, 1990, pp. 20-45.

Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath.* Penguin Books, 2014.

Strain, Catherine Benson. *Folk Medicine in Southern Appalachian Fiction.* 2002. East Tennessee State University, MA dissertation.

Strauss, Leo. "Progress or Return? The Contemporary Crisis in Western Civilization". Modern Judaism, vol. 1, no. 1, 1981, pp. 17-45

Stuart, Elinore. *Letters of a Woman Homesteader*. Dover Publications, 2006.

The Appalachian region, (no author). Appalachian Regional Commission. https://www.arc.gov/appalachian_region/TheAppalachianRegion.asp. Accessed 6 June 2020.

"The Wilderness Act Of 1964". The United States Department of Justice, 12 May 2015, www.justice.gov/enrd/wilderness-act-1964. Accessed 6 December 2019.

Thompson, Andrew R. H. *Sacred Mountains: A Christian Ethical Approach to Mountain Top Removal.* The University Press of Kentucky, 2015.

Thoreau, Henry D. *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods.* Dover Thrift Editions, 1995.

Torrance, Robert. *Encompassing Nature: A Sourcebook.* Counterpoint, 1998.

Tronto, Joan C. "Beyond Gender Difference to a Theory of Care". *Signs Journal,* vol. 12, no. 4, 1987, pp. 644-663.

---. “Women and Caring: What Can Feminists Learn about Morality from Caring”. *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, edited by Virginia Held. Westview Press, 1995, pp. 101- 115.

Trout, Elizabeth. “What is the Nature of Appalachian Identity?” *Communication Studies Student Scholarship,* 2015. Pp. 1-8.

Tuan Yi-Fu. Introduction. *Space and Place: The perspective of Experience.* University of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp. 3-8.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”. *The Frontier in American History.* The University of Arizona Press, 1986, pp. 1-39.

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Dover Thrift Editions, 1994.

Unrue, John. *The Major Novels of Harriette Arnow: A Study of Hunter's Horn and The Dollmaker*. 1965. Marshall University, MA dissertation.

Vakoch, Douglas A. “Introduction: A Different Story”. *Feminist Ecocriticism: Environment, Women, and Literature,* edited by Douglas Vakoch, Lexington Books, 2012, pp. 1-12.

Vance, Linda. “Ecofeminism and the Politics of Reality”. *Ecofeminism, Women, Animals, Nature,* edited by Greta Gaard, Temple University Press, 1993, pp. 118-145.

Vollp, Christina G. “Keep Moving: Place and Gender in a Post-Apocalyptic Environment”. *International perspectives in feminist ecocriticism,* edited by Greta Gaard, Simon Estok and Serpil Oppermann, Routledge, 2013, pp. 221-234.

Wagner, Melinda B. “Space and Place, Land and Legacy”. *Culture, Environment, and Conservation in the Appalachian South,* edited by Benita J. Howell, University of Illinois press, 2002, pp. 121-132.

Wagner-Martin, Linda. “Harriette Arnow's Cumberland Women”. *Harriette Simpson Arnow: Critical Essays on her Work*, edited by Haeja Chung, Michigan State University Press, 1995, pp. 71-82.

Walker, Margaret. “Moral Understandings: Alternative Epistemology for a Feminist Ethics”. *Hypatia,* vol. 4, issue 2, 1989, pp. 15-28.

Walsh, Kathleen. “Re-imagining the American Hunting Tale”. *Harriette Simpson Arnow: Critical Essays on her Work*, edited by Haeja Chung, Michigan State university press, 1995, pp. 153-168.

Walsh, Margaret. “Women’s Place on the American Frontier”. *Journal of American Studies*, vol.29, issue 2, 1995, pp. 241-255.

Walters, April L. *Appalachian Animals on our Mind: A Survey of Human-Animal Relationships in Appalachian Literature*. 2012. Appalachian State University, Ma Thesis.

Warnock, Donna. “Patriarchy Is a Killer: What People Concerned About Peace and Justice Should Know”. *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence,* edited by Pam McAllister, New Society Publishers, 1982, pp. 20-29.

Warren, Karen J. *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western perspective on What it Is and Why it Matters.* Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

---. Introduction. *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, edited by Karen Warren, Indiana University press, 1997, pp. 11-16.

Weatherford W. D., and Dykeman, Wilma. “Literature since 1900”. *The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey*, edited by Thomas Ford, University of Kentucky Press, 1962, pp. 259-270.

Welch, Janet B. “Uneven Ground: Cultural Values, Moral Standards, and Religiosity in the Heart of Appalachia”. *Christianity in Appalachia: Profiles in Regional Pluralism*, edited by Leonard, Bill, The University of Tennessee Press, 1999, pp. 52-73.

Welter, Barbara. “The Cult of True Womanhood”. *American Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1966, pp. 151-174.

Weston, Jack. “Hunter’s Horn by Harriette Arnow”. *The Radical Teacher*, vol. 24, 1983, pp. 32-33.

Whisenant, David E. “All that is Native and Fine: The Cultural Work of Olive Dame Campbell 1808-1848”. *All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1983, pp. 103-180.

Whitehead, Andrew L. “Gender Ideology and Religion: Does a Masculine Image of God Matter?” *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 54, 2011, pp. 139-156.

Williams, Cratis. “The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction, Part I”. *Appalachian Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1975, pp. 8-61.

Winkfield, Unca. T*he Female American; Or, The Adventures of Unca Eliza Winkfield.* Broadview Press, 2000.

Wise, Steven. “Animal Rights, One Step at a Time”. *Animal Rights, Current debates and New Directions*, edited by Cass Sunstein and Martha Nussbaum. Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 19-50.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One’s Own*. Penguin Classics, 2002.

Wrede, Theda. “Barbara Kingsolver’s Animal Dreams”. *Feminist Ecocriticism: Environment, Women, and Literature*, edited by Douglas Vakoch, Lexington Books, 2014, pp. 53-85.

Yarnell, Susan L. “The Southern Appalachians: A History of the Landscape”. Southern Research Station, 1998, pp. 1-45.

Zitkala-Sa. *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings.* Penguin Classics, 2003.

Films cited:

Deliverance. Directed by John Boorman, performances by Jon Voight, Burt Reynolds, Ned Beatty, Ronny Cox, and James Dickey, Warner Bros, 1972.

Harriette Simpson Arnow: 1908-1986. Directed by Herb E. Smith, Appalshop Inc, 1987.